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Hafa Adai!

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Saipan Tribune

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Vaccine mock pack arrives

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The CNMI received a mock delivery of a COVID-19 vaccine last Saturday, Dec. 12, as part of preparations the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is going through to receive and store the actual vaccines once they arrive.

Based on the latest projections, the COVID-19 vaccines are expected to arrive sometime before Christmas or right after Christmas.

According to CHCC's chief executive officer, Esther Muña, the mock packaging or delivery was a package that came with pretend items and was intended to put CHCC's receiving and storage process through their paces to ensure that there are no kinks when the actual vaccines arrive.

RELATED NEWS
■ 'Pro rata vaccine distribution is fair, equitable' PAGE 3

See VACCINE on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Dec. 13, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,052	27	7,079
Recovered	6,248	165	6,413
Active	524	27	551
Deaths	113	2	115
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		93,456	

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	113	0	113
Traced via Travel Screening	83	0	83
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		22,633*	
Days since last community transmission		117	

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The CHCC COVID-19 dashboard will be undergoing maintenance until further notice.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Trucks with first COVID-19 vaccine in US get ready to roll

By MATTHEW PERRONE, MIKE STOBBE and MARK SCOLFORO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The first trucks carrying a COVID-19 vaccine for widespread use in the United States were set to pull out of a Michigan manufacturing plant Sunday, with the shots that are critical to stopping the nation's coronavirus outbreak destined to reach states a day later.

RELATED NEWS
■ US says states will start getting vaccine Monday. PAGE 12

See TRUCKS on Page 4

WASTEWATER BYPASS LINE
The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. installs a temporary wastewater bypass line on the southbound outer lane on Beach Road in Chalan Kanoa after locating a sewer line blockage in the area. This repair work has caused an emergency wastewater service interruption for customers in the Chalan Kanoa area, from south of Mt. Carmel Cathedral (Chalan Kanoa Dr.) to west of Chalan Kanoa (San Isidro Ave.). NEIL FAMA

Rape trial of 2 men ends in mistrial

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has declared a mistrial in the case of Joseph Aquino Saimon and Richmond Keybond, two of four men who allegedly gang-raped a woman.

According to Superior Court Associate Judge Theresa Kim-Tenorio, the only way to ensure justice under the circumstances for the defendants is to order a mistrial. This comes soon after the victim in the case gave testimony about one of the suspect's prior violent conduct against her—contrary

See RAPE on Page 4

CITING JAPAN IS CNMI'S PRIORITY MARKET

Torres to reach out to Skymark

Torres

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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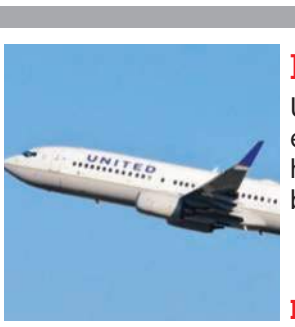
REPORTER

Saying Japan remains the CNMI's priority tourist market, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres disclosed Friday that he is going to reach out this week to Skymark Airlines Inc. in a bid to convince it to resume flying to the CNMI

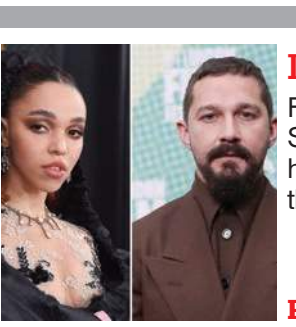
See TORRES on Page 4

INSIDE

LOCAL
Fitch Ratings has affirmed the "BB" rating of CPA's seaport revenue bonds.
PAGE 7



BUSINESS
United Airlines pledges to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050.
PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE
FKA twigs is suing Shia LaBeouf, alleging he was abusive during their relationship.
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Local

CCC CONCURS WITH CHAMBER

'IPI should be held accountable to same culture of compliance'

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Casino Commission agrees with the Saipan Chamber of Commerce that Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC must be held accountable to the same culture of compliance with labor laws and other regulations, like all other businesses in the CNMI.

CCC board chair Edward C. Deleon Guerrero and acting CCC executive director Andrew Yeom acknowledged the concerns raised by the Chamber and its members about IPI's actions or inactions, saying that while CCC is tasked with seeing that IPI delivers on its contractual agreements, CCC generally does not have the authority to enforce federal labor laws.

Last Tuesday, Chamber president Velma M. Palacios urged CCC in a letter to hold IPI accountable for violations of labor laws, wage and hour laws, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration violations. Palacios said IPI should be held to the same standards as the rest of the business community in practicing good corporate citizenry and governance.

In their response letter Thursday to Palacios, Deleon Guerrero and Yeom assured the Chamber and its members that actions are being taken but they also pointed both the federal and CNMI Department of Labor have primary enforcement authority regarding most issues involving labor. They noted that within this calendar year, the CCC executive director has filed five complaints with the CCC against IPI alleging violations of laws, regulations, and orders.

In fact, they said, Yeom filed a complaint last Sept. 1, alleging IPI's inability or unwillingness to timely pay its employees as an unsuitable method of operation pursuant to the Commonwealth Casino Regulations.

Furthermore, Deleon Guerrero and Yeom said, another CCC complaint was filed last Sept. 24 against IPI based on Yeom's allegations that IPI did not settle in full its payables owed to all vendors, including manpower and construction agencies, among others. The two CCC officials disclosed that CCC is currently setting up the process to conduct administrative hearings on all five complaints against IPI. They said the hearings will proceed beginning January 2021.

"This process is required by the gaming law and the Administrative Procedures Act, which grants the commission the authority to impose sanctions should it be required," Deleon Guerrero and Yeom said.

Sanctions may include regulatory "suspension" of the gaming license and/or "revocation" of its casino license.

IPI is contesting all the complaints.

Deleon Guerrero and Yeom said that IPI right now enjoys the presumption that it is not responsible for any violations.

Palacios asked the CCC to hold IPI accountable in making right by their employees, their creditors, their vendors, and complete Phase 1 of their casino/resort project in Garapan, as was agreed upon in their initial $7-billion investment.

"This investment was a promise to our community, and it ensures our collective success," said Palacios.

In IPI's reply to the Chamber's concerns, IPI chief executive officer Donald Browne said that, to date, IPI has invested around $1 billion in the CNMI and paid over $300 million in taxes and fees to the government, more than all of the Chamber members combined.

"It's easy to pick on businesses when they're struggling. Rational thinkers know well that the CNMI has been insulated from the effects of the pandemic due to the federal government bailout," Browne said, adding that IPI has not received even $1 in federal assistance.

Browne said they are not giving up without doing everything they can to ensure their existence and the existence of all businesses in the CNMI.

The Chamber is the largest business-civic membership association in the CNMI.

Court thumbs down handwritten will

The Superior Court has ruled not to recognize a handwritten will after a finding that the signatures on the will are unverified.

In the estate of Julia Marie Flores Boyer, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho ruled that Boyer's handwritten will was invalid because the signatures of the testator and witnesses are unverified.

Camacho, during an evidentiary hearing, said there is no testimony to verify that the alleged signatures on the will actually belonged to Boyer and the witnesses, Breanne Cabrera and Ciara Dela Cruz.

Camacho added that the will was not notarized and there wasn't any evidence, such as affidavits, to verify the authenticity of the will.

Camacho noted that the will was executed outside of the Commonwealth, also failing to comply with CNMI laws or the laws of a foreign jurisdiction.

Camacho said the will fails as a holographic will because its material provisions are not in the testator's handwriting. Holographic will is an entirely handwritten document by the author, who is also referred to as the testator.

Present at the evidentiary hearing was the estate administrator, Antonio Muna; the lawyer for the estate, George Lloyd Hasselback; and Remasch Mongani, who was in a long-term relationship with Boyer and cohabited with her for over a decade.

The will in question was handwritten by Boyer just weeks before she passed away and was signed in Portland in April 2014. The will basically would have allowed Mongani to continue to live in the home that they shared until he remarried.

Boyer traveled to Portland for medical reasons and Mongani arrived in Portland after Boyer's passing. He testified that he did not see Boyer draft the will.

Aside from Mongani, the court also heard testimonies from Muña and Boyer's sister, Guillerma Boyer Peters.

The will also gave Boyer's siblings ownership of the house. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

‘Pro rata vaccine distribution is fair, equitable’

By LISA SIMUNACI
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

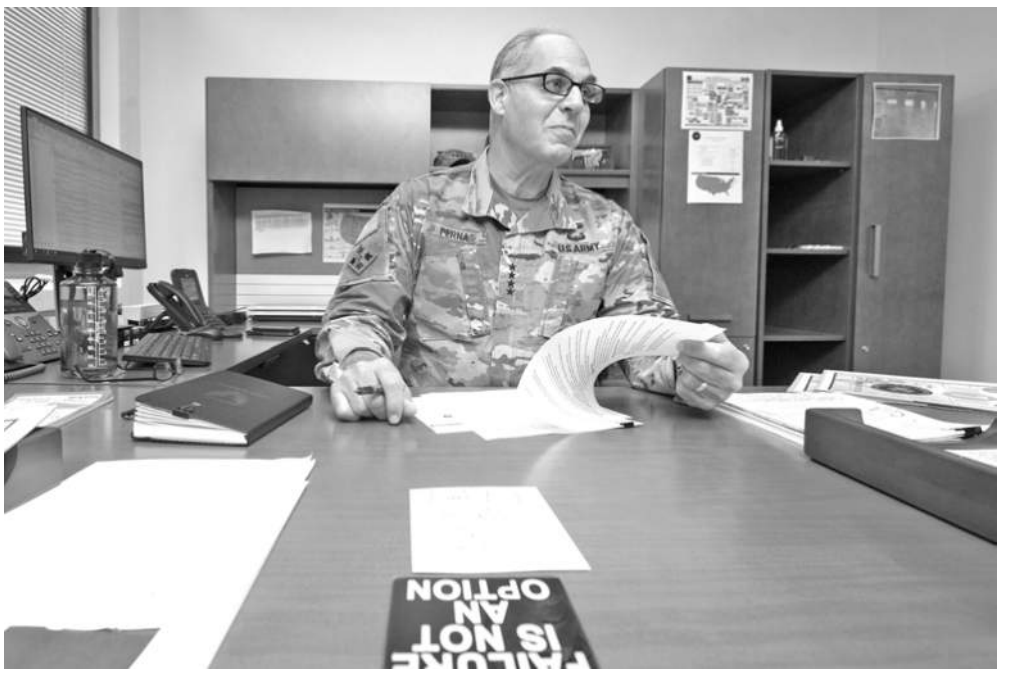
While COVID-19 vaccines roll out in limited supply, distribution is determined in direct proportion to the nation’s adult population 18 years and older. The pro rata method was approved Nov. 6 by the Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

“We considered several approaches before determining the pro rata method would result in the most fair and equitable division of available vaccine,” said Operation Warp Speed chief operating officer Gen. Gus Perna.

Operation Warp Speed covers 50 states, eight territories and freely associated states, six metropolitan cities, and five federal entities identified by pre-existing vaccine dissemination infrastructure determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Official population data establishes the foundation for both initial and ongoing allocations.

“Vaccine manufacturing continues, and each week, we will allocate additional vaccine doses based on availability and divided by the population,” said Operation Warp Speed’s Chief of Plans, Operations and Analytics Deacon Maddox.



DOD PHOTO BY EJ HERSOM

Army Gen. Gustave F. Perna, chief operating officer of Operation Warp Speed, reacts to a guest in his Washington, D.C. office Nov. 13, 2020.

New allocations will be made available to jurisdictions and agencies each Friday and uploaded into Operation Warp Speed’s Tiberius software platform. Tiberius is the system of record that computes the allocations, which are visible to state, territory and agency health officials and providers who are enrolled in the CDC’s Vaccine Tracking System, or VTrckS.

The Tiberius algorithm that determines allocation is simple, Maddox explained. The team inputs risk-adjusted manufacturing estimates, a small portion is subtracted to provide a “safety stock,” and the remainder is divided by population. The safety stock reserves about 5 percent of doses off the top that act as a buffer to account for uncertainties or issues that arise as the delivery plan is executed.

Population numbers for the states and metropolitan areas were derived from the American Community Survey as published by the U.S. Census Bureau using a 2018 data release. Populations of the U.S. territories—American Samoa, the CNMI, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands—and the freely associated states—Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and Marshall Islands—came from the Central Intelligence Agency’s World Factbook. The five federal entities include the Department of Defense, Veterans Health Administration, Indian Health Service, Department of State and Bureau of Prisons.

While four of the five federal entities provided their own population estimates, Operation Warp Speed’s leadership approved a final working figure for the Department of Defense population to account for active duty service members, their family members, military retirees, and DOD civilians.

“The diverse DOD population overlaps with other federal agencies, including the Veterans Health Administration and the states,” said Perna. “In this case, we used an approximation to maintain our goal of fair and equitable distribution.”

Like any complex plan, Operation Warp Speed made some allowances where it made sense, Maddox explained. One such decision involved allocations to Indian Health Service and the potential for inequity within tribal populations. Indian Health Service determined its population by polling 706 Indian Health facilities nationwide, asking each to decide whether to receive vaccines from the agency or their resident state.

“We identified the potential for imbalance where tribal populations opted to receive vaccines from the state where they reside,” Maddox said.

As a remedy, Operation Warp Speed created a “sovereign nation supplement” for those states with Indian Health centers that did not choose to affiliate with Indian Health Service. The solution adds a pro rata calculation to those states based on the state-supported Indian Health centers.

Geographically isolated areas, such as Alaska, American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, may order up to their monthly allocation in advance, to be delivered in the first shipment of the month. For some locations, the delivery includes both first and second doses of the two-shot vaccines.

“Where it makes sense, we have made some conciliatory decisions—and in those cases, it is beneficial both from a distribution and recipient perspective,” Maddox said.

Once vaccines are allocated, it is up to each jurisdiction or agency to place orders, designate delivery points, prioritize recipients and administer vaccines to the American people.

“We have empowered governors and agencies to make the most critical decisions because they know their people, their challenges and how to best serve their communities,” Perna said.

Christmas caroling is not encouraged—Villagomez

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The holiday tradition of going around spreading cheer by going door to door singing Christmas melodies—more popularly referred to as Christmas caroling—is not being encouraged at this time, according to Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez.

Speaking at the radio briefing last Friday, Villagomez stated that, for many reasons, caroling must be prevented because social distancing and the wearing of face masks is not present. At the same time, it fails to comply with rules when entering any sites and offices such as signing up for contact tracing purposes and having one’s temperature taken. “If an event like this happens, it’s abruptly moving from one area to another area,” said Villagomez.

He added that they want to make sure that the risk of any type of exposure or infection is avoided. Additionally, he stated that all COVID-19 enforcement agencies are aware of this measure. Health experts recognize singing as one of the fastest ways to spread the COVID-19 virus.

However, Villagomez wants to avoid penalizing people.

“We really hate to penalize at this time of the season. So what we’re asking is just cooperation and public education,” said Villagomez.

He said the Office of the Governor will soon come out with sanctions and penalties against this activity but that has yet to be released as of press time.

Not only has the Christmas caroling tradition been canceled, but the Catholic church’s tradition of bringing the statue of the Child Christ—locally known as Niño—into homes during the holidays will not take place this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bishop Ryan P. Jimenez of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa informed the public last Nov. 28 that the traditional practice of bringing the image of Child Jesus into homes will be canceled, with churches around the islands practicing safety measures.

Instead, Jimenez encourages people who usually make an offering for the church at the time of the Niño visitation to make their offerings when they visit Niño during the Sundays of Advent and Christmas.

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Natural Nail & Spa is latest NMC ProaPerks Partner

Natural Nail & Spa is the latest company to sign on as a Northern Marianas College ProaPerks Partner, joining many other businesses and organizations that provide exclusive discounts and benefits for Northern Marianas College students, employees, and alumni.

Now officially an NMC ProaPerks partner, all card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can get 5% off nail services.

Natural Nail & Spa joins the growing list of ProaPerks partners, such as 153 Restaurant, 4EVER CNMI, Alamo Car Rental, All Star Sporting Goods, Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, Bubba Gump, Caravan of Food, Docomo Pacific, Dollar Days (Garapan), Enterprise Car Rental, Ete Cafe, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Fork and Spoon, Garapan Restaurant, Great Harvest, Kiki's, National Car Rental, NMC Bookstore, Latte Built, Salty's, Saipan Computer Services, Surf Club, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Tribe Marianas, Triple J Motors, The Pacific Supply, and Pena House Boutique.

Natural Nail & Spa is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the ProaPerks program can get 5% off nail services. NMC

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information, visit marianas.edu/proaperks.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include Northern Marianas College alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

TRUCKS

From Page 1

Shipments of the Pfizer vaccine will set in motion the biggest vaccination effort in American history at a critical juncture of the pandemic that has killed 1.6 million and sickened 71 million worldwide.

Initially, about 3 million doses were expected to be sent out, and the priority is health care workers and nursing home residents as infections, hospitalizations and deaths soar in the U.S. With numbers likely to get worse over the holidays, the vaccine is offering a bright spot in the fight against the pandemic that's killed nearly 300,000 Americans.

Federal officials say the first shipments of Pfizer's vaccine will be staggered, arriving in 145 distribution centers Monday, with an additional 425 sites getting shipments Tuesday, and the remaining 66 on Wednesday. The vaccine, co-developed by German partner BioNTech, is being doled out based on each state's adult population.

Pennsylvania health care giant UPMC has chosen staff who are critical to operating its facilities as among those getting the first round of vaccinations, said Dr. Graham Snyder, who led the center's vaccine task force.

"It's very exciting. I will be thrilled, that moment when we administer our first dose," Snyder said Saturday. "That will clearly be a watershed moment for us."

Snyder said the UPMC system estimates that half its employees are willing to get the vaccine as soon as it's offered to them.

The vaccine is heading to hospitals and other sites that can store it at extremely low temperatures — about 94 degrees below zero. Pfizer is using containers with dry ice and GPS-enabled sensors to ensure each shipment stays colder than the weather in Antarctica.

Doses should be delivered to all vaccination sites identified by states, such as local pharmacies, within three weeks, federal officials said.

The 40-hospital Oschner Health System in Louisiana and Mississippi expects to receive more than 9,000 doses in the coming days, said Dr. Sandra Kemmerly, medical director of hospital quality.

Employees approved for the first round are getting texts and emails directing them to schedule their initial injection, she said.

"I would say there's enthusiasm," Kemmerly said Saturday. "There's that thought that maybe they don't have to be so afraid to come to work if they can be vaccinated and be immune."

The rollout will ensure there is enough vaccine to give people the two doses needed for full protection against COVID-19. That means the government is holding back 3 million doses to give those vaccinated in the first round a second shot a few weeks later.

The Food and Drug Administration authorized emergency use of the vaccine Friday, saying it is highly protective and presents no major safety issues. While U.S. regulators worked for months to emphasize the rigor and independence of their review, they faced political pressure until the final stages.

Concerns that a shot was rushed out could undermine vaccination efforts in a country with deeply ingrained skepticism about vaccines. The head of the FDA said the agency's decision was based on science, not politics, despite a White House threat to fire him if the vaccine wasn't approved before Saturday.

While the vaccine was determined to be safe, regulators in the U.K. are investigating several severe allergic reactions. The FDA's instructions tell providers not give it to those with a known history of severe allergic reactions to any of its ingredients.

Another vaccine by Moderna will be reviewed by an expert panel this week and soon afterward could be allowed for public use.

TORRES

From Page 1

Speaking at a radio briefing last week, Torres said that many travel partners worked hard with the Marianas Visitors Authority to bring Skymark Airlines and bring back the Japanese market to the CNMI in the first place and that Skymark has been doing very until the COVID-10 pandemic.

"Eventually, they [Japanese] are our priority tourist market," said Torres, adding that they want to continue that partnership with Skymark.

The governor said he has not reached out yet to Skymark directly, but that he would like to just have conversation with the airlines sometime this week.

Torres said that even Japan is having a hard time because of the pandemic and, like South Korea, also requires a 14-day quarantine when residents return home.

"Japan also has the 14-day quarantine when a resident returns to Japan. Those are the challenges that we have," he said. "So even if we are safe here, even if we do open and we welcome a travel bubble, there are other factors that each country needs to address, and to allow their tourists or their citizens to leave the country and what to expect when they return home," he said.

Torres said that, as far as they know, Skymark has suspended all its flights because of COVID-19.

"But we continue to monitor also the tourists domestically within Japan, and what opportunities we have to open those flights back to Saipan," he said.

Torres said he is hoping that the whole CNMI can benefit from the entry of tourists, whether it's from Japan or Korea.

He pointed out that, in early '90s, there were Japanese tourists who would return to the CNMI several times, even as many as 10 times. "So those are the markets that we want to [tap] because those are tourists that travel every year, every other year. And we want to have the CNMI as a world-class destination for all our tourists," he added.

Starting last March 26, Skymark suspended their Narita-Saipan flights in response to decreased travel demand due to the global coronavirus outbreak and the enforcement of quarantine measures by the CNMI and Japan governments.

Early last week, Torres announced that he anticipates the partial resumption of tourism from South Korea to the CNMI under the bubble travel program that will start next month, January.

He said the CNMI continues to work on reopening the tourism industry through a travel bubble agreement with source markets such as South Korea and Japan. He said the CNMI, however, has to remain cautious to ensure that any resumption of flights puts the health and safety of people first.

RAPE

From Page 1

to the judge's instruction.

Kim-Tenorio said the court cannot allow the continuation of the trial for the sake of justice and fairness and with the possibility of an incurable prejudice. In addition, the court does not believe that any instruction to the jury regarding the statement will undo any inferences that have already been made.

Prior to calling the victim up to testify, the court informed the government, represented by Office of the Attorney General's Coleen St. Clair, that evidence alluding to any prior violent conduct by Saimon against the alleged victim would not be allowed. The government informed the alleged victim of this but she still did so.

"Now that the jury has been exposed to the alleged victim's testimony, defendants, especially…Saimon are ill prepared to rebut, or effectively cure whatever inference has already been made," she said.

Saimon, through his assistant public defender JP Norgues, argued that because of the victim's testimony, there is a high possibility that the jury will consider all alleged actions by Saimon on the day of the alleged incident with an understanding that, if he was violent in the past, he must have been violent during the alleged incident.

"While the court immediately instructed the jury to ignore the statement in contention, the damage is already done," Nogues said.

As for Keybond, his lawyer, Cong Nie, argued that the testimony of the alleged victim would also color the jury's view of him.

"Defendants should not be forced to bear the burden of matters not concerning the charges against their person. [The] defendants prepared for trial with the understanding that the trial would concern two defendants. To suddenly lose a defendant would leave the remaining defendant, in this case defendant Keybond, unprepared to mount a proper defense," he said.

On Dec. 9, St. Clair informed the court of its intent to offer evidence regarding Saimon's alleged prior acts of domestic violence against the victim. The court later determined that the prosecutor has to give reasonable notice of the general nature of any such evidence, before trial, or during trial, if the court, for good cause, excused a lack of pretrial notice. In this matter, the court determined that good cause did not exist to excuse the lack of pretrial notice.

The court determined that the government had enough time before trial to notify the defense of its intent, and that while the government argued that bringing up its intent to offer up such evidence at trial was permissible, it did not present the court with reasons why it did not provide the defendants with notice much earlier.

On Dec. 11, the victim took the stand to testify. At some point during her testimony, she was informed by St. Clair, outside the eyes and ears of the jury, the she is prohibited from testifying about domestic violence.

However, while she was in the process of describing the alleged incident, she stated that "she was scared of what [Saimon] would do because he would become physical with her at times."

Nogues objected to the testimony, and after a sidebar, asked the court to declare a mistrial.

VACCINE

From Page 1

"[We're practicing] in preparing for the real thing. These items are not what you normally order from Amazon. They are extremely sensitive. Timing and key logistics must be in place to get them from one point to another," said Muña.

According to her, the shipment was meant to check how long the shipment took and if any issues occurred on its way here. It involved CHCC and other agencies on the COVID-19 Task Force. The mock shipment was sent here by Operation Warp Speed and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ***See related story on Page 3***

In a separate statement before the mock package arrived, Warren Villagomez, head of COVID-19 Task Force, said: "We were notified that a mock shipment is coming in. We are also exercising all the measures that we will be implementing upon arrival of the actual vaccine, because it is a high-level transport. There is security involved in [the] areas of payment and delivery," said. Additionally, Villagomez disclosed that there will be a checklist that will be provided on what the vaccine stockpile will need to go through.

With the COVID-19 vaccine not being available to children just yet (16 years old and younger), Gov. Ralph DLG Torres stated that the most important thing to do in order to protect this population is to continue social distancing (waiting at a 6-foot distance), hand washing, and wearing a mask, and to continue to follow Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

"We also want to make sure that we safeguard our children, if we don't have the vaccine specifically for them," said Torres.

Muña stated that in order to further protect the younger population, CHCC will be campaigning in the next two weeks for children to be inoculated against influenza. "That's one of the things that the kids can actually get it right now. So, we encourage everyone to check our website [to get the details of the outreach," said Muña.

To learn more about the flu vaccine shot, you can visit vaccinatecnmi.com for more information.

Public's help sought to ID suspect

On Friday, Dec. 4, 2020, at about 10:56am, the CNMI Department of Public Safety received a 911 call reporting a burglary incident at the Hans Tire Shop in Chinatown, Saipan.

At the scene, police met with the owner of the establishment, who told police that the incident took place on Nov. 28, 2020, around 11:20pm, according to the timestamp on the security footage. The owner did not notice the damage to the door until Monday morning when the shop was due to open.

When he noticed the damaged door, he immediately had it repaired while the footage from the security camera was being processed. On Dec. 4, 2020, the owner called DPS to file a report with the footage of the incident. The police did not disclose what items were missing from the store.

DPS is seeking the public's help in identifying the individual seen on the surveillance footage. The suspect appears to have a tattoo on his right forearm.

If you have any information related to this incident at the Hans Tire Shop, call 911. If you wish to remain anonymous call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Photo shows the suspect in the Hans Tire Shop burglary in this frame grab taken from the security footage.

SHSS' Reyes is BOE student rep

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has appointed Rainalyn Reyes, a Saipan Southern High School senior, as student representative on the Board of Education. Reyes was elected by her peers, resulting in her appointment.

According to Reyes, she hopes to advocate for students in which "their voices will be heard and taken into account."

Reyes said she aims to be "the voice" for every student and that she intends to make her time on the board worthwhile. "With me on board, the BOE meetings could have a student perspective," said Reyes., adding that she would like to bring many changes to the school year that will benefit all students.

Reyes is not a stranger when it comes to leadership. Reyes was vice president of Service for the National Honor Society, secretary of the Student Council, a JROTC staff member, a junior class officer, as well as the secretary in the Youth Advisory Panel. ***(Justine Nauta)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-009

Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation of two SCADA systems and two additives at Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-009, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 5, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020** to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-011
ISLEY BOOSTER II TRANSMISSION AND BOOSTER PUMP UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of upgrading of existing Isley Booster II Pump Station (IB-2); installation of new transmission line to the existing Dandan tank; rehabilitation of existing IB-2 concrete sump tank, yard piping, aboveground flowmeter and valve station with concrete pad, and all other appurtenances at the IB-2 site; construction of a new chlorine and electrical building; installation of new booster pump system (triplex system); construction of new perimeter security fencing and facility lighting; and restoration of existing asphalt concrete road. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-011, Isley Booster II Transmission and Booster Pump Upgrade** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 05, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms.

Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) of the total bid price shall accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 21, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any non-material imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-001
ROTA WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PHASE- 2 PROJECT REPLACEMENT OF FLOW METER AND PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE (W17-053)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Construction of Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project in Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists, in general removal and installation of gate valve assembly, PRV, flow meter, strainer, pressure gauge and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **120 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **December 3, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Rota Directors Office, Sinapalo, Rota.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-21-001, Rota Water System Improvements Phase 2 Project Replacement of Flow Meter and Pressure Release Valve"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 7, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Edgar Tuazon, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email edgar.tuazon@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Purchasing Technician Senior via email - marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NEWS BRIEFS

CNMI Bar Association donates to Toys for Tots and the NMI Cycling Federation

In past years, the CNMI Bar Association celebrated the holidays with an annual holiday party for its members. In light of everything the CNMI community has gone through this year, the Bar Association elected to forego their annual holiday party and instead use the funds to spread some holiday cheer by gifting a $500 donation each to both Toys for Tots and the NMI Cycling Federation.

The CNMI Bar Association chose Toys for Tots for a donation because all children are the future and even if the celebration of the holidays is a little different this year, one of the most important gifts is kindness and support to those in need. The CNMI Bar Association also chose the NMI Cycling Federation for a donation to help raise health awareness of the benefits of physical activity and encourage the Marianas to keep moving. ***(PR)***

Free training for improving communication with those with dementia

Caregivers of the elderly are invited to a free virtual training session on tips and strategies for improving communication with the elderly, in particular those with dementia.

The Guam/Micronesia Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program at the University of Guam's School of Health will host the session from 6pm to 7:30pm today, Dec. 14, on Zoom.

Clare Camacho, a certified speech-language pathologist, will present on important communication aspects when caring for those with dementia, including communication aides, tips for speaking, and the effects of such tactics.

The session is free and open to the public in Guam and all of Micronesia. Register at https://bit.ly/SP121420. ***(PR)***

TOYS FOR TOTS SPONSOR

The Saipan Mayor's Office is now an official 2020 Toys for Tots sponsor this holiday season. The Toys for Tots program is a charitable initiative hosted by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve that provides toys to disadvantaged children during the Christmas holiday season. The program is spearheaded by the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Saipan Young Professionals. For more information, email saipantoys4tots@gmail.com.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SESAP Q1 meeting tomorrow

The Public School System State Board of Education, through its Special Education State Advisory Panel, will hold its first quarter meeting tomorrow, Dec. 15, 2020, from 1pm to 3pm at the Board of Education conference room, Capital Hill, Saipan and via videoconferencing. This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome.

In compliance with the American Disabilities Act, individuals who wish to attend this meeting, but require accessibility such as large print or sign language interpreters must call 237-3029/3012. ***(PR)***

Join the 2020 Christmas Bird Count

Did you know the CNMI is home to bird species found nowhere else in the world? Are you interested in practicing your bird identification skills and meeting other Saipan birders?

On Saturday, Dec. 19, the public is invited to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count with the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Started in 1900 by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is the world's longest-running citizen science project. Volunteers for the count will meet at 6am at American Memorial Park to divide into teams for roadside and walking surveys.

Teams will spread out to cover the island, finding and recording as many birds and bird species as possible. Bring binoculars if you have them, but it's okay if you don't.

For more information, contact Emilie Kohler, 670-664-6030 or kohler.dfw@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Scheduled power interruption on Thursday

There will be a scheduled power interruption on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020, from 9am to 1pm in the Tapochao area to replace a damaged primary power pole along Tapochao Road. No water well or wastewater lift station will be affected.

Because of the scale of work that will be performed, the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. asks travelers to exercise caution when driving through the working area. CUC apologizes in advance for any inconvenience and appreciates the public's understanding during this scheduled outage. For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.comlCommonwealthUtilitiesCorporationl). ***(PR)***

Emergency wastewater service interruption and temporary road closure

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there is currently an emergency wastewater service interruption for customers in the Chalan Kanoa area, from south of Mt. Carmel Cathedral (Chalan Kanoa Dr.) to west of Chalan Kanoa (San Isidro Ave.).

The cause of the emergency wastewater service interruption is due to a sewer line blockage located along Chalan Kanoa, Beach Road (across from Dial Rent-to-Own). CUC Wastewater personnel conducted a daily routine check last Thursday and discovered a deficiency in the wastewater system, prompting operators to inspect the sewerline.

To minimize the deficiency, CUC will be installing a temporary wastewater bypass line on the southbound outer lane on Beach Road, Chalan Kanoa. This lane will be closed during the duration of the bypass line scheduled run time hours. The schedule to operate the bypass line will be performed twice daily from 8:30am to 11:30am, and from 2:30pm to 5:30pm, beginning last Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020, until further notice. However, should heavy rainfall occur, the bypass line would be running more frequently to avoid any sewer overflows.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, motorists are advised to exercise caution or take alternative routes.

For more information, contact the CUC hotline at 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Caller Box 10007 | Saipan, MP 96950 | Tel: (670) 664-1708 | Fax: (670) 664-1710
Email: cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp

Regular General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, December 16, 2020
9:30am – 11:00am
Venue: NMC Board of Regents Conference Room and Virtual on Zoom

AGENDA

I. **Call to Order**
II. **Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum**
III. **Review and Adoption of Agenda**
IV. **Review and Adoption of Minutes**
  a. June 17, 2020 Minutes
V. **Public Comments (See Note Below)**
VI. **Reports**
  a. SWDB Chairperson
  b. Executive Committee
  c. Planning, Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Committee
  d. Program Committee
  e. Policies and Procedure Committee
  f. Core Programs
    i. Title I: DOL Workforce Investment Agency
      1. Financials
      2. Programs
    ii. Title II: Adult Basic Education
    iii. Title IV: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
VII. **Old Business**
  a. State Plan
    i. Waiver Approval
  b. Eligible Training Provider Applications
    i. Guam Marianas Training Center
    ii. Island Training Solutions
VIII. **New Business**
  a. Board Vacancies
IX. **Executive Session**
X. **Announcements**
XI. **Next Meeting**
X. **Adjournment**

Note: Due to Covid-19 safety measures, if any members of the public are interested in making public comments or attending by Zoom, please email cnmiswdb@dol.gov.mp for the link prior to the meeting. You must have access to a computer to participate.

Approved by:
/s/
Josephine DLG. Mesta
Chair

Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/BUSINESS OFFICE-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 16, 2020 • TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"CASH TRANSIT SERVICES"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & S UPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP21-CHCC/CGC-DRP-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/FINANCE-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 22, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"SINGLE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEARS ENDING 2019, 2020 & 2021"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/PH-NCDB-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BUREAU (NCDB) WEBSITE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Fitch affirms 'BB' rating of CPA seaport revenue; outlook stable

Credit rating agency Fitch Ratings has affirmed the "BB" rating on approximately $18.3 million of outstanding Commonwealth Ports Authority senior series 1998A and 2005A seaport revenue bonds. The Rating Outlook is Stable.

The rating reflects the essentiality of the ports to a small, island economy amidst high exposure to economic volatility from tourism and a nearly 100% import-based cargo operation. The rating also considers CPA's sustained revenue performance and history of controlled expenses. Despite recent adverse impacts on operational performance, CPA is expected to maintain financial metrics supportive of the current rating level. Under Fitch's rating case scenario, which incorporates coronavirus-related stresses, coverage levels average 2.1x through the forecast period. CPA further benefits from robust liquidity levels that provide some mitigation to a prolonged softening of cargo demand.

The outbreak of coronavirus and related government containment measures worldwide create an uncertain global environment for both cargo and cruise operations. Material changes in revenue and cost profile are occurring across the port sector and will continue to evolve as economic activity and government restrictions respond to the ongoing situation. Fitch's ratings are forward-looking in nature, and Fitch will monitor developments in the sector as a result of the virus outbreak as it relates to severity and duration, and incorporate revised base and rating case qualitative and quantitative inputs based on expectations for future performance and assessment of key risks.

The seaports remain essential for the import of goods to an island economy; however, there is potential for stagnant operational trends due to CNMI's exposure to macroeconomic factors and its elevated dependence on a limited tourist base. Volume stability is expected given that food and fuel related cargos account for more than 50% of import-dependent revenue tonnage.

The CNMI's narrow economy and exposure to economic volatility limit management's economic flexibility to raise rates on seaport system tenants and users. Following the last increase in 2009, the authority's focus has instead been on effective containment of operating expenses.

The ports once handled nearly twice as much cargo and are in satisfactory condition to deal with current and forecasted demand. The authority's capital improvement plan is manageable and funded with grants and internally generated funds. No additional debt is anticipated in the near to medium term.

The authority maintains 100% fixed-rate, fully amortizing debt with a level debt service profile and a 2031 final maturity. Structural features and reserves are sufficient and consistent with other Fitch-rated ports.

Financial profile

CPA maintained favorable leverage and liquidity metrics offset by a modest coverage ratio of 2.2x in fiscal 2019 (unaudited). Estimated fiscal 2019 net debt-to-cash flow available for debt service is negative, reflecting cash balances exceeding debt outstanding. The CPA maintains strong balance sheet cash and reserves available for operating expenses, with days cash on hand currently exceeding 1,900. These liquidity and leverage metrics provide the CPA with some degree of flexibility to meet financial commitments in weak performing periods. Rating case coverages, when including stresses related to coronavirus, are expected to average 2.1x through the forecast period.

Rating sensitivities

Factors that could, individually or collectively, lead to positive rating action/upgrade:

--Given the ports' limited operating profile and significant exposure to local economic factors, positive rating migration is not anticipated at present.

Factors that could, individually or collectively, lead to negative rating action/downgrade:

- A severely weakened underlying service area economy that results in the seaports' inability to maintain cargo levels at or near current levels for a sustained period;
- Depressed debt service coverage levels resulting from declining operating revenues;
- A shift in the seaports' balance sheet liquidity and financial flexibility resulting from changes in operating expense management or pricing power.

Credit update

Revenue trends have been volatile in the past few years, attributed to the reduction in inbound revenue tonnage and damage from storms such as Super Typhoon Yutu that have passed through the CNMI. While the ports are located in an island economy with exposure to tourism, CPA also has a mix of non-operating revenues (grants and interest income) to help offset declines in operating revenue.

Seaport operations at all three ports (Saipan, Tinian, and Rota) have continued through the current pandemic. Although operations have not ceased, the reduction in incoming revenue tonnage has led to an anticipated 20% decline in overall seaport revenues in fiscal 2020. Total tonnage through August 2020 (11 months of fiscal 2020) is currently down approximately 24% to 412,104 tons in comparison to the prior year.

Management has indicated that tenants and operators have been making timely payments. Additionally, the CPA board approved a tenant relief program for seaport tenants, which provided discounts on lease fees over the course of six months from April 2020 through September 2020.

In light of the pandemic, CPA also implemented significant austerity measures to reduce operational costs and help offset the anticipated decline in revenues in fiscal 2020. Effective March 1, 2020, these austerity measures include reduction of employee hours by 16 hours bi-weekly and a freeze on all personnel actions and travel outside of the CNMI.

Coverage in fiscal 2019 is estimated to be approximately 2.2x and leverage remains negative. Though coverage is expected to weaken in the near term, the reductions in seaport operations and revenue are offset by stable non-operating income and a low debt service obligation of just over $3 million.

Financial analysis

Fitch has developed two scenarios that serve as the basis for this review. The two cases are labeled as the "Coronavirus Rating Case" and the "Coronavirus Severe Downside Case." Given the current economic environment due to the coronavirus and the unlikeliness of a stable operating environment over the near term, Fitch's Coronavirus Rating Case is also considered the Base Case.

Fitch's scenarios assume modest cargo declines in the final quarter of 2020 and into 2021, reflecting the potential for additional spikes in coronavirus cases resulting in lessened economic activity and a recessionary period. Cargo recovery to 2019 levels is anticipated by calendar year 2022 under rating case assumptions. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: December 4, 2020 • **CLOSING DATE:** December 21, 2020
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary:
2020-008	***RE-ANNOUNCEMENT*** CDBG-DR Loan Supervisor (1- Position)	UNGRADED $40,000.00 to $45,000.00-per annum
2020-014	***RE-ANNOUNCEMENT*** CDBG-DR Accountant (2-Positions)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00-per annum
2020-015	***RE-ANNOUNCEMENT*** CDBG-DR Project Supervisor (1-Position)	UNGRADED $35,000.00 to $45,000.00-per annum

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
JVA No. 21 – 015

Opening Date: December 04, 2020 • Closing Date: December 17, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	**Warehouse Assistant**
DEPARTMENT:	**CFO/Warehouse**
LOCATION:	**Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,511.00 - $19,850.00 per annum, Non -Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or his/her designee.

Duties:
- The Warehouse Assistant assists with physical inventories of stock, materials and supplies; takes material counts and/or verifies counts.
- Prepares, packs and delivers materials and supplies; receives and responds to division and department material needs and requests.
- Loads and unloads materials and supplies; assists with offloading containers and materials; operates forklift as needed.
- Verifies quantities and quality of materials received; prepares receiving documents and reports; routes and delivers paperwork.
- Maintains order and in worksites and warehouse areas; stocks and restocks inventory materials in designated bin locations; may assist in determining whether materials are scrapped or salvaged.
- Prepares and issues materials for air, sea or postal delivery; reviews pick lists and verifies quantities and material accuracy.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School diploma, GED or (AS) through the Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Preparing, packing, issuing and delivering materials and supplies; Verifying material quantities and quality; Providing attention to detail; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- Licensing:
  - Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
  - Forklift Operator license (preferred)

- Physical Demands:
  - Occasional lifting of objects; Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Remembering Chuck Yeager

Chuck Yeager died this week, at 97. It's amazing that a great movie has never been made of his life. His was a life that, if anything, was larger than its own lore and legend.

Maybe no movie, or actor, could do such a life justice.

He went from a squirrel-hunting, outdoor-loving, wild West Virginia boy to the greatest test pilot of all time—arguably the greatest aviator of all time. The only two who could contest him for the title are Charles Lindbergh and Neil Armstrong.

He flew some 150 different military aircraft and logged 10,000 hours in the air. He flew for nearly 60 years, which included his years as a World War II flying ace (he shot down 13 German planes, five in one day), his test pilot years and 127 missions in Vietnam.

He started as an enlisted man in the Army Air Corps, and a mechanic. And he said understanding how planes were put together and functioned was the key to his success as a test pilot and why he was chosen to fly the Bell Aircraft X-1, in which he broke the sound barrier in 1947.

But Yeager did not retire from the Air Force until the mid-1970s. By then he was a brigadier general. He kept flying, and he kept testing planes, for decades more.

He became the commander of the U.S. Air Force Flight Test Pilot School, at Edwards Air Force Base in the Mojave Desert. There he trained a new generation of test pilots and, of course, the first generation of astronauts. He could not become an astronaut himself because he had no college degree—only the coolest head, best reflexes and deepest curiosity in aviation or aerospace.

And that is the great misunderstanding about the general: He was not the "cowboy in the sky," as some dubbed him. Yes, he had daring and panache, and seemed to be fearless (though he said he was always keenly aware of death and trying to outmaneuver it). But he held that the real key to flying was knowledge—first, knowing your plane and, second, seeking ever-greater understanding of different kinds of planes and flight itself.

God knows Yeager had fun. He said he went to flight school because he noticed pilots had clean hands and had pretty girls on their arms. The morning he broke the sound barrier, he had two taped-up broken ribs. He'd been racing his wife, whom he dubbed "Glamorous Glennis" and named his planes after, on horseback the night before and he hit a closed fence in the dark.

But the greatest fun, he said, was figuring out problems no one had ever tackled, not to mention solved, before.

He was not a cowboy but a master engineer and a scientist (much like Lindbergh and Armstrong).

Yeager's joy in living and insatiable technical and intellectual curiosity were indivisible and of a whole.

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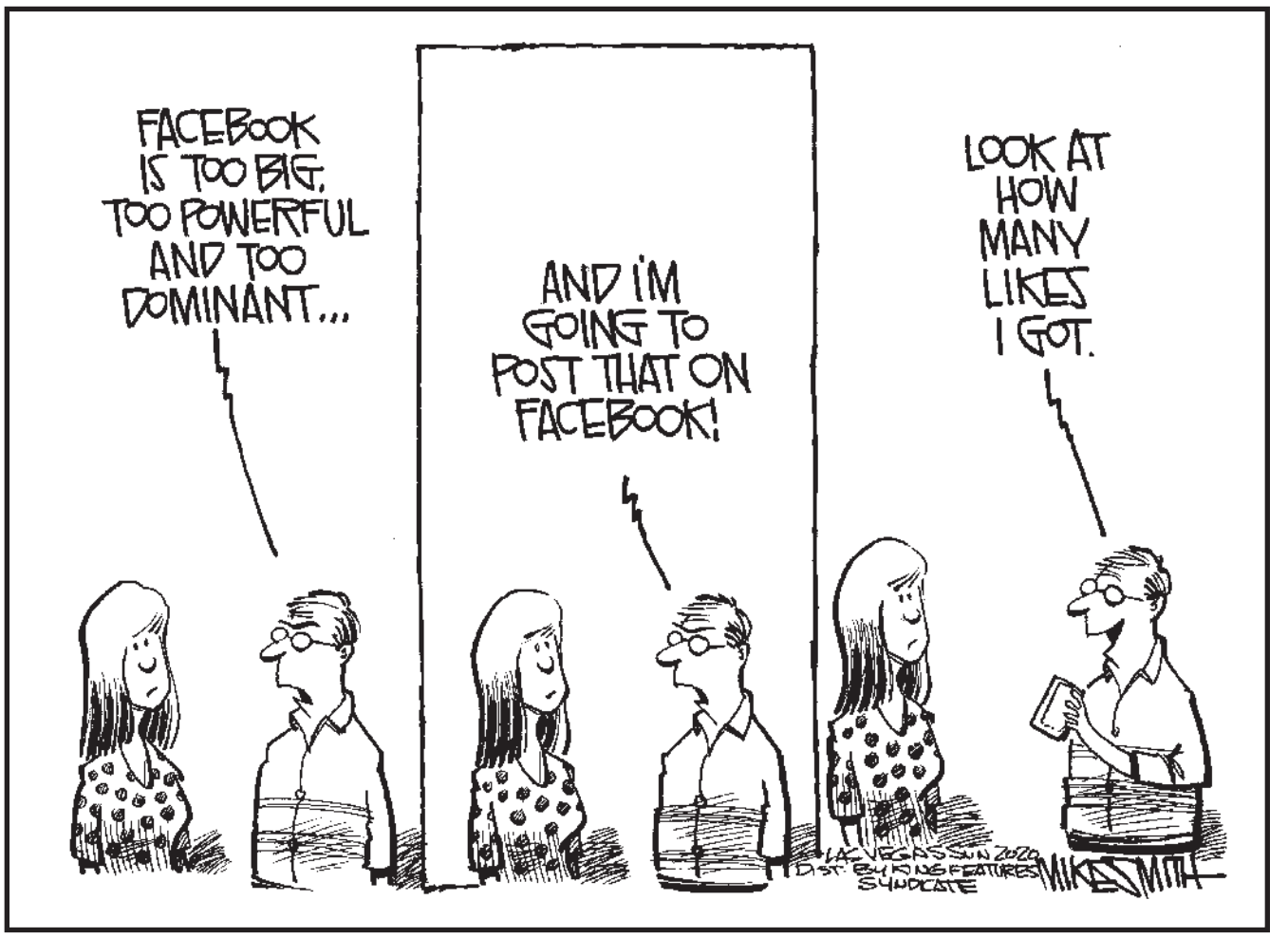
FACEBOOK IS TOO BIG. TOO POWERFUL AND TOO DOMINANT...
AND I'M GOING TO POST THAT ON FACEBOOK!
LOOK AT HOW MANY LIKES I GOT.
LAS VEGAS SUN 2020 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE
MIKE SMITH

It's time to scare people about COVID

By Elisabeth Rosenthal
Kaiser Health News

Elisabeth Rosenthal is editor-in-chief of Kaiser Health News,s a national health policy news service. It is an editorially independent program of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation which is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.

I still remember exactly where I was sitting decades ago, during the short film shown in class: For a few painful minutes, we watched a woman talking mechanically, raspily through a hole in her throat, pausing occasionally to gasp for air.

The public service message: This is what can happen if you smoke.

I had nightmares about that ad, which today would most likely be tagged with a trigger warning or deemed unsuitable for children. But it was supremely effective: I never started smoking and doubt that few if any of my horrified classmates did either.

When the government required television and radio stations to give $75 million in free airtime for anti-smoking ads between 1967 and 1970—many of them terrifyingly graphic—smoking rates plummeted. Since then, numerous smoking "scare" campaigns have proved successful. Some even featured celebrities, like Yul Brynner's posthumous offering with a warning after he died from lung cancer: "Now that I'm gone, don't smoke, whatever you do, just don't smoke."

As the United States faces out-of-control spikes from COVID-19, with people refusing to take recommended, often even mandated, precautions, our public health announcements from governments, medical groups and health care companies feel lame compared with the urgency of the moment. A mix of clever catchphrases, scientific information and calls to civic duty, they are virtuous and profoundly dull.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges people to wear masks in videos that feature scientists and doctors talking about wanting to send kids safely to school or protecting freedom.

Quest Diagnostics made a video featuring people washing their hands, talking on the phone, playing checkers. The message: "Come together by spending time apart."

As cases were mounting in September, the Michigan government produced videos with the exhortation, "Spread Hope, Not Covid," urging Michiganders to put on a mask "for your community and country."

Forget that. Mister Rogers-type nice isn't working in many parts of the country. It's time to make people scared and uncomfortable. It's time for some sharp, focused, terrifying realism.

"Fear appeals can be very effective," said Jay Van Bavel, associate professor of psychology at New York University, who co-authored a paper in Nature about how social science could support COVID response efforts. (They may not be needed as much in places like New York, he noted, where people experienced the constant sirens and the makeshift hospitals.)

I'm not talking fear-mongering, but showing in a straightforward and graphic way what can happen with the virus.

From what I could find, the state of California came close to showing the urgency: a soft-focus video of a person on a ventilator, featuring the sound of a breathing machine, but not a face. It exhorted people to wear a mask for their friends, moms and grandpas.

But maybe we need a PSA featuring someone actually on a ventilator in the hospital. You might see that person "bucking the vent"—bodies naturally rebel against the machine forcing pressurized oxygen into the lungs, which is why patients are typically sedated.

(Because I had witnessed this suffering as a practicing doctor, I was always upfront about the trauma with loved ones of terminally ill patients when they were trying to decide whether to consent to a relative being put on a ventilator. It sounds as easy as hooking someone to an IV. It's not.)

Another message could feature a patient lying in an ICU bed, immobile, tubes in the groin, with a mask delivering 100% oxygen over the mouth and nose—eyes wide with fear, watching the saturation numbers rise and dip on the monitor over the bed.

Maybe some PSAs should feature a so-called COVID long hauler, the 5% to 10% of people for whom recovery takes months. Perhaps a professional athlete like the National Football League's Ryquell Armstead, 24, who has been in and out of the hospital with serious lung issues and missed the season.

These PSAs might sound harsh, but they might overcome our natural denial. "One consistent research finding is that even when people see and understand risks, they underestimate the risks to themselves," Van Bavel said. Graphs, statistics and reasonable explanations don't do it. They haven't done it.

Only after Chris Christie, an adviser to President Donald Trump, experienced COVID, did he start preaching about mask-wearing: "When you have seven days in isolation in an ICU, though, you have time to do a lot of thinking," Christie said, suggesting that people, "follow CDC guidelines in public no matter where you are and wear a mask to protect yourself and others."

We hear from many who resist taking precautions. They say, "I know someone who had it and it's not so bad." Or, "It's just

See SCARE on Next Page

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Bill of Rights Day: We keep our freedoms by teaching them

By ANGELA SAILOR and ADAM KISSEL
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Did you know Dec. 15 is "Bill of Rights Day"? If the answer is no, you're not alone. Most Americans are barely aware of it.

Sadly, that's not surprising. Most of us would fail the U.S. citizenship exam. Few can name more than one or two First Amendment rights or more than a few rights in the entire first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. That is a serious problem, especially at a time when lawsuits nationwide ask judges to reform criminal justice or to stop states from discriminating against religious gatherings.

It doesn't have to be this way, though. And fortunately, different kinds of organizations are addressing Americans' lack of civic knowledge in unique ways.

Take Constituting America, founded by actor Janine Turner, and co-led by Cathy Gillespie. Very few organizations engage students to teach one another, but Constituting America is one of them. It encourages multimedia peer education through its We the Future contest. A student may create a TikTok video, a song or a work of art to help other kids understand their American rights and responsibilities.

For teachers, the aptly named Bill of Rights Institute, the Ashbrook Center, and a few similar organizations provide teachers with the education that they should have received in education school but never did. These organizations engage teachers in serious discussion of core documents in American history to understand how principles of freedom, legal equality and rights have unfolded throughout our short, fragile, but well-balanced history as a republic.

Fundamental American values like these are constantly under debate. The National Christian Forensics and Communications Association is one of just a few organizations—if not the only one—that helps students think deeply enough about different points of view to debate them intelligently, with integrity and with grace toward those who disagree.

Fewer organizations exist at the college level, in part because too many people assume that kids have had enough civics by the time they've graduated high school. The William S. Knight Center for Patriotic Education at College of the Ozarks is one of the innovative college-level projects under construction. When people learn about America's founding principles, they tend to love these principles and become informed patriots. Many of us love this heritage enough to defend it and to encourage us to become a "more perfect Union" by living up to it.

In policy, the Texas Public Policy Foundation and other state-level organizations encourage policymakers to address America's civic literacy deficits. The organization's Tom Lindsay, for instance, has challenged the false perspective of the 1619 Project—which pretends that the basic story of America is slavery and discrimination instead of equality and freedom—and has challenged activism civics, which comes at the expense of core understanding and the bigotry of low expectations.

Those unfortunate trends all too often distract legislators from what citizens need to learn most, and these policy organizations successfully fight back.

Of course, all of these organizations, and many more, do much more to improve civic education in America in many ways. Parents, in particular, are a significant part of their work and a large part of the solution. "We are in charge of our children's futures, and it's time for a revolution," Turner wrote upon founding Constituting America a decade ago.

On Bill of Rights Day, we can hear about all of these organizations in a special celebration hosted by The Heritage Foundation's Feulner Institute. We invite everyone to tune in to learn, celebrate and think carefully about our first freedoms.

Now that parents in 2020 see what their homebound children are really being exposed to, more and more parents are using resources from these organizations and are calling for curricular transparency and reform.

Note also that none of these are government programs. Self-governance requires that we all step up to preserve our best values for the next generation. The question is, are we?

Angela Sailor is vice president of the Feulner Institute at The Heritage Foundation. Adam Kissel is Senior Fellow of the Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy.

Restaurants have become pandemic scapegoats.

My last one is struggling to survive

Before the pandemic, my husband and I managed a staff of more than 100 among our four restaurants in Los Angeles. Now we're down to one location, in Playa del Rey.

Decimating our staff was never part of our business plan.

Since March, we've permanently closed Da Kikokiko in Playa Vista and the Tripel in Playa del Rey. We recently sold Hudson House in Redondo Beach, which left us with Playa Provisions and a part-time staff of 12 going into the holiday season.

How did we get here? Restaurants are being treated as scapegoats—quick to be blamed for a spike in COVID-19 cases, without evidence. The most recent Los Angeles County outdoor dining shutdown, which went into effect Nov. 25, seemed like it was just another in a series of government restrictions that make zero scientific sense.

When LA County Superior Court Judge James Chalfant ordered Los Angeles County public health officials to present scientific evidence justifying the outdoor dining ban, I experienced a minor moment of relief and thought, "Could this be progress?" It felt like a potential step forward.

Chalfant was speaking for many in my industry on Dec. 2 when he said, "You have to do a risk-benefit analysis for public health. You don't just talk about the risk of spreading disease. You have to talk about the benefit of keeping restaurants open."

The next day our industry was dealt another setback when Gov. Gavin Newsom issued far-reaching statewide restrictions that included requiring restaurants to return to takeout service only for at least three weeks. We realize these are extraordinary times that require extraordinary measures, but, looking out my restaurant window, it just feels like my industry is being unfairly targeted.

Evidence shows the latest spike in COVID cases, specifically in Los Angeles County, is a direct result of indoor gatherings. Closing outdoor dining will likely drive people to gather privately indoors, which is potentially far more dangerous than eating outdoors at restaurants that take COVID-19 precautions and social distancing extremely seriously.

At Playa Provisions, we haven't offered indoor seating since March, except for a couple of weeks in early summer when pandemic restrictions were eased. As part of an industry that's already held to higher health standards than most, Playa Provisions has passed four county health department inspections since the beginning of the pandemic, demonstrating success in adhering to constantly evolving COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

With a full-service patio, and no indoor dining, we were back to averaging about 50% of our usual sales and 75% of our normal staffing for this time of the year (minus the usual holiday parties and catering). It didn't last. With the latest elimination of outdoor seating, our revenue has fallen to about 15% of the norm, causing us to furlough nearly 40 more employees. The outdoor heaters and additional weatherproof coverings we purchased to continue operating outdoors in cool weather now sit in our bar space turned storage unit.

The thousands of restaurant workers across Los Angeles who are losing their livelihoods are going from food-insecure to food-terrified. The average restaurant worker in Los Angeles earns about $16 an hour working 40 hours per week. If Playa Provisions is any indication, about 75%, if not more, have already lost that income. The rest will have their salaries cut roughly in half as their hours are pared back. When a restaurant closes, a domino effect occurs that affects farmers, liquor reps, delivery drivers, linen companies and so many others. We've already had to cut back or eliminate our cleaning crew, dishwashers, busboys, line cooks, hosts, service staff and managers.

As an industry, restaurants regularly pay it forward by contributing to philanthropic causes. Giving back is how we define our successes. However, if we are to save an industry that has tried to pivot while taking one for the greater good, then we are going to need help.

By BROOKE WILLIAMSON
Los Angeles Times

Brooke Williamson is the chef-owner of Playa Provisions and a "Top Chef" winner.

Unless the restaurant industry receives a financial bailout, we may be looking at the permanent closure of about 85% of independent restaurants, resulting in approximately 16 million people across the country losing their jobs.

I want to believe that federal and state assistance is moments away, that something as well-constructed as the federal Restaurants Act—which passed in the House in October—will become law and save the hospitality industry with a $120 billion revitalization fund that would give small and independent restaurants grants so we can make our payroll, pay our bills and keep our doors open.

Yet the bill languishes in Congress. We have no idea how long this could take, or if help will even come. As of late last week, there were optimistic rumblings of a federal relief package that would include $288 billion for struggling restaurants and small businesses. Please let it be so.

So what is our plan for survival? It changes almost daily. But if I had to answer that question today, I'd say we're crossing our fingers that we can make it through the next few weeks of uncertainty, with the hope of reopening outdoor dining and obtaining significant financial aid. In other words, we're awaiting an industrywide Hail Mary.

SCARE

From Page 8

like the flu."

Sure, most longtime smokers don't end up with lung cancer—or tethered to an oxygen tank—either. (That, in fact, was the justification of smokers like my father, whose two-pack-a-day habit contributed to his death at 47 of a heart attack.)

These new ads will seem hard to watch. "We live in a Pixar era," Van Bavel reflected, with traditional fairy tales now stripped of their gore and violence.

But studies have shown that emotional ads featuring personal stories about the effects of smoking were the most effective at persuading folks to quit. And quitting smoking is much harder than maintaining physical distance and mask-wearing.

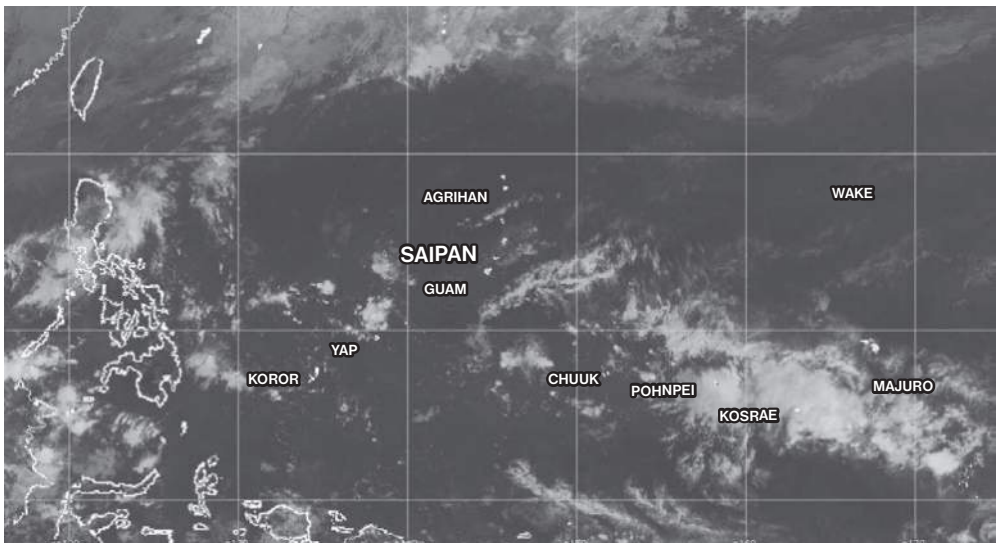
Once a vaccine has proved successful and enough people are vaccinated, the pandemic may well be in the rearview mirror. In the meantime, the creators of public health messaging should stop favoring the cute, warm and dull. And—at least sometimes—scare you.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.	Breezy. Partly sunny with isolated showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:38 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A few small changes made to the forecast. Early morning satellite imagery shows only a few showers over the Marianas. This same imagery show an area of clouds to the east of the local area. These clouds are associated with a westward moving weak trade-wind disturbance. 850-700 mb layer relative humidity does show an increase through the morning. This increase will not be too dramatic and showers should remain isolated but enough moisture will be present to produce mostly cloudy skies.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 82°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:34 AM	5:48 PM
Tuesday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	5:46 AM	5:23 PM	-
Tuesday	6:51 AM	6:22 PM	-
Wednesday	7:55 AM	7:24 PM	-
Thursday	8:54 AM	8:25 PM	-
Friday	9:47 AM	9:23 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	43° / 36°
Beijing	Sunny	30° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	66° / 64°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	78° / 70°
London	Showers	46° / 37°
Los Angeles	Sunny	77° / 51
Manila	Partly Cloudy	84° / 72°
Melbourne	Sunny	77° / 55°
Miami	Sunny	70° / 63°
New York	Partly Cloudy	35° / 26°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	50° / 37°
Paris	Showers	43° / 36°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	50° / 32°
Rome	Showers	55° / 54°
Salem	Sunny	58° / 36°
San Francisco	Sunny	62° / 46°
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	37° / 19°
Tokyo	Cloudy	48° / 34°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	39° / 29°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:46 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.39
10:19 AM	LOW TIDE	0.55
4:30 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.90
11:33 PM	LOW TIDE	-0.13

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

THANKSGIVING DRIVE-THRU
McDonald's Saipan hosts a Thanksgiving drive-thru food event for its employees.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Business

United pledges to be 100% green by 2050

CHICAGO— United Airlines today is taking its most ambitious step yet in leading the fight against climate change: pledging to become 100% green by reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 100% by 2050. United, which in 2018 became the first U.S. airline to commit to reducing its GHG emissions by 50% by 2050, will advance towards carbon neutrality by committing to a multimillion-dollar investment in revolutionary atmospheric carbon capture technology known as Direct Air Capture—rather than indirect measures like carbon-offsetting—in addition to continuing to invest in the development and use of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). With this unprecedented announcement, United becomes the first airline in the world to announce a commitment to invest in Direct Air Capture technology.

"As the leader of one of the world's largest airlines, I recognize our responsibility in contributing to fight climate change, as well as our responsibility to solve it," said Scott Kirby, United's chief executive officer. "These game-changing technologies will significantly reduce our emissions, and measurably reduce the speed of climate change – because buying carbon offsets alone is just not enough. Perhaps most importantly, we're not just doing it to meet our own sustainability goal; we're doing it to drive the positive change our entire industry requires so that every airline can eventually join us and do the same."

Investment in Direct Air Capture technology

Rather than simply taking a conventional approach to decarbonization by relying solely on the purchase of carbon offsets, United intends to make a multimillion-dollar investment in 1PointFive, Inc., a partnership between Oxy Low Carbon Ventures, a subsidiary of Occidental (NYSE:OXY), and Rusheen Capital Management. 1PointFive's mission is to curb the rise in global temperatures by physically removing carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the air using Direct Air Capture technology licensed from Carbon Engineering.

Direct Air Capture technology is one of the few proven ways to physically correct for aircraft emissions, and can scale to capture millions and potentially billions of metric tons of CO_2 per year. The captured CO_2 will then be permanently, safely and securely stored deep underground by Occidental, a process certified by independent third parties. The commitment – the first to be announced in the aviation industry – will help 1PointFive build the first industrial-sized Direct Air Capture plant in the United States. A single plant is expected to capture and permanently sequester one million tons of CO_2 each year, the equivalent of the work of 40 million trees, but covering a land area about 3,000 times smaller.

Investments in sustainable aviation fuel

With up to 80% less lifecycle carbon emissions than conventional jet fuel, sustainable aviation fuel is the fastest and most effective way United is reducing its emissions. Among all airlines globally, United holds more than 50% of all publicly announced future purchase commitments to using SAF and has the longest history of using SAF of any U.S. airline. Last year, United renewed its contract with Boston-based World Energy, agreeing to purchase up to 10 million gallons of cost-competitive SAF. United has used this SAF to help sustainably power every flight departing its Los Angeles hub since 2016.

Additionally, United has invested more than $30 million in California-based sustainable fuel producer Fulcrum BioEnergy, which remains the single largest investment by any airline globally in a sustainable fuel producer.

Since 2016, United has used the most SAF of any airline globally and has flown:

- 26 million passengers on flights powered with a SAF blend
- 44 billion passenger-miles on flights powered with a SAF blend
- 215,000 flights powered with a SAF blend

United's commitment to environment

United's commitment to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050 represents yet another leadership position the airline has taken to reduce its impact on the environment. United's significant environmental achievements include:

Becoming the first airline globally to incorporate SAF in regular operations on a continuous basis, marking a significant milestone in the industry by moving beyond test programs and demonstrations to the everyday use of low-carbon fuel in ongoing operations

In 2019, we committed $40 million toward an investment initiative focused on accelerating the development of SAF and other decarbonization technologies

Operating the Flight for the Planet in 2019, which represented the most-eco-friendly commercial flight of its kind in the history of commercial aviation

Becoming the first airline to fly with Boeing's Split Scimitar winglets, which reduce fuel consumption by an additional 2% versus standard winglets; United is the largest Scimitar winglet operator today, with nearly 400 aircraft equipped with these winglets

Becoming the first U.S. airline to repurpose items from the carrier's international premium cabin amenity kits and partnering with Clean the World to donate hygiene products to those in critical need

Eliminating non-recyclable plastic stirring sticks and cocktail picks on aircraft and replacing them with a more environmentally friendly product made of 100% bamboo

Continuing to replace its eligible ground equipment with cleaner, electrically powered alternatives, with nearly 45% of the fleet converted to date

In 2017, Air Transport World magazine named United its Eco-Airline of the Year for the second time since the airline launched the Eco-Skies program. Additionally, United ranked No. 1 among global carriers in Newsweek's 2017 Global 500 Green Rankings, one of the most recognized environmental performance assessments of the world's largest publicly traded companies.

For more information on United's commitment to environmental sustainability, visit united.com/ecoskies. ***(PR)***

Retailers urge shoppers to buy early amid shipping crunch

NEW YORK (AP)—A number of retailers, including J.C. Penney, Lowe's and Kohl's, are telling shoppers they need to place their online orders soon or else pay expedited shipping fees if they want to get their packages delivered in time for the holidays.

The earlier-than-usual deadlines come as more people turn to online shopping during the pandemic, creating a logjam for shipping companies as well as delivery delays. For some retailers, like H&M and Lego, the deadlines have passed.

Nation

US says states will start getting vaccine Monday

WASHINGTON (AP)— The nation's first COVID-19 vaccine will begin arriving in states Monday morning, U.S. officials said Saturday, after the government gave the final go-ahead to the shots needed to end an outbreak that has killed nearly 300,000 Americans.

AP

The Pfizer Global Supply Kalamazoo manufacturing plant is shown in Portage, Mich., Friday, Dec. 11, 2020.

Trucks will roll out Sunday morning as shipping companies UPS and FedEx begin delivering Pfizer's vaccine to nearly 150 distribution centers across the states, said Army Gen. Gustave Perna of Operation Warp Speed, the Trump administration's vaccine development program. An additional 425 sites will get shipments Tuesday, and the remaining 66 on Wednesday.

Initially, about 3 million doses were expected to be shipped nationwide. It was unclear exactly who would receive the first shots, though health care workers and nursing home residents were the priority. Perna said health authorities would decide.

A similar number of shots will be held back for those recipients' second dose, which is needed for full protection from COVID-19.

The announcement Saturday kicks off a massive logistical operation involving the federal and state governments, private companies and health care workers to quickly distribute limited vaccine supplies throughout the U.S. It offers hope in a country grappling with surging COVID-19 infections and deaths, which are overwhelming hospitals and raising fears that things will only get worse as people gather over the holidays.

Perna compared the vaccine distribution effort to D-Day, the U.S.-led military offensive that turned the tide in World War II.

"D-Day was the beginning of the end and that's where we are today," Perna said a news conference. But he added that it would take months of work and "diligence, courage and strength to eventually achieve victory."

MaineHealth, a network of 12 hospitals based in Portland, plans to provide an expected first delivery of nearly 2,000 vaccines to doctors, nurses and others facing risk as they treat COVID-19 patients, said Dr. Dora Mills, chief health improvement officer.

"It's almost hard for me to talk about without tearing up," Mills said Saturday. "This vaccine gives us some glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel."

The first shipments will leave Pfizer's manufacturing plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan, by truck and then be flown to regional hubs around the country. Medical distributor McKesson and pharmacy chains, including CVS and Rite-Aid, also are involved in the initial rollout and vaccinations at nursing homes and assisted living centers.

Tempers flare as Trump supporters rally in Washington

WASHINGTON (AP)— Thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump returned to Washington on Saturday for rallies to back his desperate efforts to subvert the election that he lost to Joe Biden.

Sporadic fights broke out between pro-Trump and anti-Trump demonstrators after sundown. WRC-TV reported that four people were taken to a hospital with stab wounds, and the Metropolitan Police Department told the station that 23 people were arrested.

The gatherings of mostly unmasked Trump loyalists were intended as a show of force just two days before the Electoral College meets to formally elect Biden as the 46th president. Trump, whose term will end Jan. 20, refuses to concede, while clinging to baseless claims of fraud that have been rejected by state and federal courts, and Friday by the Supreme Court.

Trump tweeted his apparent surprise Saturday morning at the rallies, publicly known for weeks: "Wow! Thousands of people forming in Washington (D.C.) for Stop the Steal. Didn't know about this, but I'll be seeing them! #MAGA"

Trump left the White House around midday for the trip to the Army-Navy football game at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York. As the Marine One helicopter passed over a rally on the National Mall, cheers went up.

Michael Flynn, the former national security adviser recently pardoned by Trump, was speaking from the stage at the time.

"That's pretty cool. Imagine just being able to jump in a helicopter and just go for a joy ride around Washington," said Flynn, whose pardon wiped away his conviction for lying to the FBI during the Russia investigation.

At a pro-Trump demonstration in Washington a month ago, Trump thrilled supporters when he passed by in his motorcade en route to his Virginia golf club.

That demonstration, which drew 10,000 to 15,000 people to the capital, ended late in the evening with scattered clashes between Trump's loyalists and local activists near Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House.

On Saturday, police took more steps to keep the two sides apart, closing a wide swath of downtown to traffic and sealing off Black Lives Matter Plaza.

But while Saturday's rallies, including one on Freedom Plaza downtown, were smaller than on Nov. 14, they drew a larger contingent of the Proud Boys, a neo-fascist group known to incite street violence. Some wore bullet-proof vests as they marched through town.

World

S. Korea reports 950 cases, biggest daily jump

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea has reported 950 new coronavirus cases, its largest daily increase since the emergence of the pandemic, as fears grow about overwhelmed hospitals in the greater capital area.

The figures released Saturday brought the country's caseload to 41,736, after health officials added more than 8,900 cases in the last 15 days alone. Six COVID-19 patients died in the past 24 hours to bring the death toll to 578.

Nearly 680 of the new cases came from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where health workers have struggled to track transmissions popping up from just about everywhere, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, restaurants, saunas, schools and army units.

Infections were also reported in other major urban centers, including Busan, Gwangju, Daejeon, Ulsan and Daegu, a southeastern city that was the epicenter of the spring outbreak.

The government had eased its social distancing restrictions to the lowest tier in October despite experts warning about a viral surge during colder weather, when people spend longer hours indoors.

Officials restored some restrictions in recent weeks, such as shutting nightclubs and allowing restaurants to provide only deliveries and takeouts after 9 p.m., and could be forced to clamp down on economic activity further.

Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said South Korea may have to elevate social distancing restrictions to the highest level, which includes a ban on gatherings of more than 10 people, school closures, a halt to to professional sports and requiring companies to have most of their employees work from home.

President Moon Jae-in in a Facebook message apologized for his government's failure to contain the outbreak despite months of measures that hurt the economy. He pleaded for vigilance, saying the country was going through its "last crisis before the arrival of vaccines and treatment."

Health officials are also trying to ramp up testing and prevent the virus from being spread by those with mild or no symptoms.

From Monday, rapid antigen tests at emergency rooms, intensive care units and remote hospitals will be covered by the national health insurance, which would cost recipients about 8,000 won ($7) each.

Antigen tests and another form of rapid testing based on saliva samples will also be available at designated sites in the capital area free of charge and regardless whether people are symptomatic.

The country will also deploy more than 800 police officers, troops and civil servants to support contact tracing.

In other developments in the region:

—Tokyo reported 621 new coronavirus cases Saturday, setting a new record in the capital where a lack of government measures triggered concerns about a surge during the holiday season. Nationwide, Japan reported a total of 174,000 cases, with about 2,500 deaths. Experts on a Tokyo metropolitan task force say serious cases are on the rise, putting burdens on hospitals and forcing many of them to scale back on care for other patients. Japan issued a non-binding state of emergency in the spring and has survived earlier infection peaks without a lockdown. The coronavirus task force on Friday asked the national government to take tougher steps to slow social and economic activities, such as suspension of out-of-town trips and requesting shorter business hours in areas where infections are accelerating. Latest data shows that ongoing measures have been ineffective and the situation could worsen during the holiday season.

Shadowy Ethiopian massacre could be 'tip of the iceberg'

UMM RAKOUBA, Sudan (AP)—The only thing the survivors can agree on is that hundreds of people were slaughtered in a single Ethiopian town.

Witnesses say security forces and their allies attacked civilians in Mai-Kadra with machetes and knives or strangled them with ropes. The stench of bodies lingered for days during the early chaos of the Ethiopian government's offensive in the defiant Tigray region last month. Several mass graves have been reported.

What happened beginning Nov. 9 in the agricultural town near the Sudanese border has become the most visible atrocity in a war largely conducted in the shadows. But even here, much remains unclear, including who killed whom.

Witnesses in Mai-Kadra told the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International that ethnic Tigrayan forces and allies attacked Amhara—one of Ethiopia's largest ethnic groups but a minority in Tigray. In Sudan, where nearly 50,000 people have fled, one ethnic Amhara refugee gave The Associated Press a similar account.

But more than a dozen Tigrayan refugees told the AP it was the other way around: In strikingly similar stories, they said they and others were targeted by Ethiopian federal forces and allied Amhara regional troops.

It's possible that civilians from both ethnicities were targeted in Mai-Kadra, Amnesty now says.

"Anyone they found, they would kill," Tesfaalem Germay, an ethnic Tigrayan who fled to Sudan with his family, said of Ethiopian and Amhara forces. He said he saw hundreds of bodies, making a slicing gesture at his neck and head as he remembered the gashes.

But another refugee, Abebete Refe, told the AP that many ethnic Amhara like him who stayed behind were massacred by Tigrayan forces.

"Even the government doesn't think we're alive, they thought we all died," he said.

The conflicting accounts are emblematic of a war about which little is truly known since Ethiopian forces entered Tigray on Nov. 4 and sealed off the region from the world, restricting access to journalists and aid workers alike. For weeks, food and other supplies have run alarmingly low. This week Ethiopia's security forces shot at and briefly detained U.N. staffers making the first assessment of how to deliver aid, a senior Ethiopian official said.

IN CELEBRATION OF HER NEW LIFE

†Antonnette Marie Tenorio Laniyo

Lovingly known as "Ton; Tonnette: Tona"

October 30, 1974 - November 29, 2020

In Her new life, she now joins her:

Brother: †Manuel Q. Tenorio, Jr.
Step-father: †Jose E. Echaluse
Parents-in-law: †Daniel I. & Anunsacion L. Laniyo
Maternal Grandparents: †Daniel R. & Maria T. Quitugua
Paternal Grandparents: †Miguel P. & Antonina C. Tenorio
Sisters-in-Law: †Maria Ana L. Laniyo "Kitalang"
†Frances M. Hosono
Brother-in-Law: †Jose L. Laniyo "Zorro"
Nephew: †Shane C. Laniyo
Godson: †John Jesse Tenorio

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Husband: Lucas Limes Laniyo
Daughter: Nipighiyong Lunnette Mae T. Laniyo
Mother: Patricia Q. Echaluse
Father: Manuel C. & Elphidia T. Tenorio
Siblings: SiAnaLynn E. & Peter Jeffrey (PJ) Camacho
Mark Daniel Q. Echaluse/Antoinette T. Camacho
(JohnRick "JD", Ruleiyna Franzeen,
Rieyanna Maeleen, Vittoria Amor, Palani Jezthon)
Jonathan T. & Debra T. Tenorio (Jumica)
Jemalyn T. Tenorio
Reared Siblings: Doming Q. Delacruz/Desiree B. Masga (Tyler, Kody, Desmory)
Brittney Joy DLC. & Thomas Yoon (Tyrone, Leina Nicole, Ava Christine)
Reared Daughters: Jace Allyson T. Pineda
Brittany T. Luzama

Her Love and Memories will also live in the hearts of her:

Maternal Aunts, Uncles, & Families: Children of the late †Antonio T. Quitugua, Children of the late †Susana Q. Lizama, Ana Q. Lizama (Benedicto) & family, Agnes Q. Cabrera (Antonio) & family, Elizabeth Q. Terlaje (Jose) & family, Dave T. Quitugua & family, Alicia T. Quitugua & family, Jovita Q. Cabrera (Leonardo) & family, Joaquin T. Quitugua (Bea) & family, Agida Q. Manglona (John) & family, Daniel T. Quitugua, Jr. (Ruth) & family, Ramona Q. Bowie (Joseph) & family, Barbara Q. Sablan (Dave) & family, Adelina T. Quitugua (Remy)

Paternal Aunts, Uncles, & Families: †Margarita C. Tenorio & family, Rosalina C. Tenorio & family, †Winifreda T. Aguon (David) & family, Magdalena T. Barbour (Joe) & family, Lorenzo C. Tenorio (Margarita) & family, Isabel T. Rabago (†Jose) & family, Susana C. Tenorio & family, Vicente C. Tenorio (Georgia) & family, Patricia T. Castro (Eliseo) & family, Joseph C. Tenorio (Elma) & family, Edward C. Tenorio (†Gloria) & family

Laniyo Family
Marciano & Norita Family
Seman-Camacho Family
Hosono Family
Island Cruiserz Family (Johnver, Kobe, Richard, Sean, Jeff, Mark, Zoe)

Nightly rosaries are held at the residence of Susana C. Tenorio, at 8pm.
Mass of Intention for the repose of Her soul is scheduled on the following:
Mt. Carmel Cathedral - 6AM Mass/San Roque Parish - 6PM Mass/St. Jude Parish - 6PM Mass
Last Respects for our beloved Antonnette Marie will be held on Wednesday, December 16, 2020 from 0730am to 1045am at the residence of Susana C. Tenorio at San Roque.
Mass Services will be at 11a.m. at the San Roque Parish.
Interment services will immediately follow at the San Roque Cemetery where she will be laid to rest.

For everyone's safety, you are requested to wear a mask and to observe/practice social distancing during the ceremony.

Thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase, and Olomwáay

Lucas, Nipighiyong, and Family

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

ASK THE PEDIATRICIAN

Are holiday gatherings too risky during the pandemic?

By Dr. JENNIFER SHU
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

DREAMSTIME/TNS

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, gatherings with people outside your household continue to be risky. Public health experts say that small household gatherings are among the key reasons COVID-19 cases are rising this fall.

Q Are holiday gatherings a bad idea during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A For many families, the holidays are about getting together with relatives and friends. But as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, gatherings with people outside your household continue to be risky. Public health experts say that small household gatherings are among the key reasons COVID-19 cases are rising this fall.

With some extra planning and lower risk activities, though, your family can create lasting memories while lowering the risk of being exposed to or spreading COVID-19. Here are some tips I'm sharing with families in my practice this year:

■ **Celebrate with members of your own household.** Limit any in-person celebration to people you live with. Cooking with your children and decorating your home are great ways to enjoy each other's company while protecting your family and others from COVID-19.

■ **Find creative ways to share the experience remotely.** Prepare a favorite recipe with extended family over video chat. Share what you are grateful for together at the start of the holiday meal. Count down to the New Year together virtually.

■ **Consider a dropoff potluck.** Another way to share the holiday spirit is to prepare traditional recipes for family and neighbors. Instead of sharing them in person, delight them with a doorstep dropoff.

■ **Grocery shop online and help elderly or higher-risk loved ones.** Grocery shop online with delivery and curbside pickup options, if possible. Consider holiday food deliveries to elderly relatives. If you need to shop in person, go when stores are not as busy.

If you do have an in-person gathering with people outside your household, which is riskier, here are some ways to help make them safer:

■ **Keep the gathering small and short.** Keep your guest list as small as possible and reduce the amount of time you would usually visit.

■ **Wear cloth face coverings and keep your distance.** People who live together can sit together, but arrange for those from different households to stay at least 6 feet apart—especially while eating. Remind everyone to wear cloth face coverings when they're not eating.

■ **Open windows and stay outside when possible.** Open windows for better ventilation. If weather permits, gather outdoors. Stay a safe distance apart from others and wear cloth face coverings with multiple layers or medical masks, even outside.

■ **Try a safer serving.** Avoid buffet or family-style dinners and choose one person do the serving or get individual meals if ordering out. Remind children to wash hands often, and keep hand sanitizer within reach.

■ **Remind everyone to follow safety steps beforehand.** For two weeks before the gathering, remind guests to follow steps that lower the risk of COVID transmission. This includes wearing cloth face coverings, physical distancing, and limiting outings and social gatherings as much as possible. Consider offering your guests a "self-screening" checklist and ask them to join you virtually rather than in person if they don't pass the screen.

If you travel this holiday season, drive with family members in a private vehicle, if possible. Wear a mask at gas stations and rest stops. If you must travel by air, be careful around large groups clustered security lines and concourses, wear masks in airports and on planes, and hang back until lines have thinned.

Do not host or participate in any in-person festivities if you or anyone in your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is still at risk of spreading it to others; has had any symptoms of COVID-19 within 48 hours of the gathering; is waiting for viral test results; could have been exposed to someone in the last 14 days; or is at high risk.

Stay safe this holiday season and your family will be even more grateful for your traditions in the years to come.

Dr. Jennifer Shu is the medical editor of HealthyChildren.org, the American Academy of Pediatrics' website for parents.

Home office ergonomics tips

DREAMSTIME/TNS

Proper office ergonomics, including correct chair height, adequate equipment spacing and good desk posture, can help you and your joints stay comfortable when working.

Ergonomics is the way you fit to your workspace. Proper office ergonomics, including correct chair height, adequate equipment spacing and good desk posture, can help you and your joints stay comfortable when working.

With so many people working from home because of COVID-19, it's important to have proper ergonomics in the workspace.

Watch as Dr. Edward Laskowski, co-director of Mayo Clinic Sports Medicine and Corey Kunzer, D.P.T., a Mayo Clinic physical therapist, demonstrate how to achieve ergonomics at home:

Chair

Choose a chair that supports your spinal curves. Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Adjust armrests so your arms gently rest on them with your shoulders relaxed.

Key objects

Keep key objects, such as your telephone, stapler or printed materials, close to your body to minimize reaching. Stand up to reach anything that can't be comfortably reached while sitting.

Keyboard and mouse

Place your mouse within easy reach and on the same surface as your keyboard. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below the level of your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use.

If possible, adjust the sensitivity of the mouse so you can use a light touch to operate it. Alternate the hand you use to operate the mouse by moving the mouse to the other side of your keyboard.

Telephone

If you frequently talk on the phone, and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.

Footrest

If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor—or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair—use a footrest. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books instead.

Desk

Under the desk, make sure there's clearance for your knees, thighs and feet. If the desk is too low and can't be adjusted, place sturdy boards or blocks under the desk legs. If the desk is too high and can't be adjusted, raise your chair. Use a footrest to support your feet as needed. If your desk has a hard edge, pad the edge or use a wrist rest. Don't store items under your desk.

Monitor

Place the monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard. If you wear bifocals, lower the monitor an additional 1 to 2 inches for more comfortable viewing. Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network/TNS)***

For more information and all your COVID-19 coverage, go to the Mayo Clinic News Network and mayoclinic.org.

Life & Style

FKA twigs sues Shia LaBeouf, alleging abusive relationship

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Singer FKA twigs filed a lawsuit Friday alleging that Shia LaBeouf was physically and emotionally abusive during their relationship from 2018 to 2019, saying her experience was part of a pattern of terrorizing women for the 34-year-old actor.

"Shia LaBeouf hurts women," the lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court said in its opening lines. "He uses them. He abuses them, both physically and mentally. He is dangerous."

FKA twigs—a 32-year-old British singer and actress whose legal name is Tahliah Barnett—alleges in the lawsuit that LaBeouf left her in a constant state of fear and humiliation, once slammed her into a car, tried to strangle her and knowingly gave her a sexually transmitted disease.

An email sent to a representative seeking comment from LaBeouf was not immediately returned, but in an email to The New York Times the actor said: "I have no excuses for my alcoholism or aggression, only rationalizations. I have been abusive to myself and everyone around me for years. I have a history of hurting the people closest to me. I'm ashamed of that history and am sorry to those I hurt."

The two met and became a couple after Barnett was cast in "Honey Boy," an autobiographical film about LaBeouf's upbringing as a child actor that portrayed his father as abusive but loving. Barnett had a supporting role alongside LaBeouf.

After what the lawsuit described as an early "charm offensive," LaBeouf convinced Barnett to move in with him, leading to what the lawsuit characterized as a "living nightmare."

AP

This combination photo shows FKA twigs, left, at the 62nd annual Grammy Awards on Jan. 26, 2020, in Los Angeles and Shia LaBeouf at the premiere of "The Peanut Butter Falcon" during the London Film Festival on Oct. 3, 2019.

LaBeouf isolated FKA twigs from family and friends, demanding absolute fealty, and constant verbal abuse led to several physical attacks on her, the lawsuit claimed.

He was ferociously jealous of everyone from waiters she was polite with to her ex-fiance, actor Robert Pattinson, the lawsuit alleged.

On a Valentine's Day getaway in 2019, FKA twigs awoke to LaBeouf choking her and she was paralyzed with fear, the lawsuit said. He later drove wildly and threatened to crash his car if she didn't profess eternal love for him and she feared for her life, the lawsuit claimed.

DeGeneres: Positive test for coronavirus but 'feeling fine'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ellen DeGeneres says she has tested positive for COVID-19 but is "feeling fine right now."

Production on her daytime talk show has been paused until January, producer Telepictures said in a statement that followed DeGeneres' Thursday announcement.

In an Instagram post, DeGeneres said anyone who was in close contact with her has been notified, adding that she's following "all proper CDC guidelines," a reference to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"I'll see you all again after the holidays. Please stay healthy and safe," DeGeneres said in her post.

Reruns of "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" were to air starting Thursday.

When the coronavirus outbreak hit in March, DeGeneres shifted to taping without a studio audience, as did other talk shows. When the series began its 18th season in September, her show added fans virtually into the seats, then said it would allow a few dozen people into the studio.

Graduate thanks Nicki Minaj for tuition—med school next

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP) — A University of Louisiana at Lafayette student who just graduated is thanking rap artist Nicki Minaj for paying his tuition.

Three years ago, someone on Twitter reached out to Minaj with a request for the musician to help pay for college. Minaj agreed—on the condition that they show her perfect marks. She wrote , "Show me straight A's that I can verify w/ur school and I'll pay it."

A few dozen fans took Minaj up on the offer including Artavion Cook. He asked on Twitter if she could help pay his current outstanding balance of $1,300. She did and this week Cook graduated with a bachelor's in science in biology.

"This day is even more special because @NICKIMINAJ paid my tuition a few semesters ago, and today is her birthday!" he Tweeted, according to the Daily Advertiser.

The newspaper reports that Cook is looking forward to medical school and is getting ready to take the MCAT in the spring. He'd like to go to LSU Shreveport, Morehouse, Howard University, or Meharry Medical College.

Taylor Swift surprises fans with another album due tonight

Taylor Swift fans are getting a double reason to celebrate this year—the singer-songwriter is about to release her second album in 2020.

"To put it plainly, we just couldn't stop writing songs," Swift wrote in social media posts Thursday morning. "I've never done this before. In the past I've always treated albums as one-off eras and moved onto planning the next one after an album was released."

Swift said the new album is called "Evermore," which she described as a "sister" album to her latest release, "Folklore." A video for a new song, "Willow," will arrive along with the album, to be released at midnight ET Thursday.

Taylor revealed the track list for the 15-song new album and noted that some of the guests are Haim, The National and Bon Iver. She turns 31 on Sunday.

"Folklore," released this summer, enjoyed three separate visits to No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart and became the first album to sell a million copies in the U.S. in 2020. ***(AP)***

Rapper Lil Wayne pleads guilty to federal weapons charge

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Rapper Lil Wayne pleaded guilty Friday to a federal charge that he possessed a weapon despite being a convicted felon following a 2019 search of a private plane in the Miami area.

The rapper, whose real name is Dwayne Michael Carter, entered the plea during a hearing held remotely before U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams.

"Your honor, I plead guilty to the charge," Carter told the judge.

Williams set a Jan. 28 sentencing date. The charge carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years, but it's likely Carter would get far less time than that. He's free on $250,000 bail but had to surrender his passport.

Authorities said the 38-year-old rapper acknowledged possessing a .45 caliber, gold-plated handgun and six rounds of ammunition after his luggage was searched upon arriving in Miami on Dec. 23, 2019, from California. A search warrant said Carter told investigators the gun was a Father's Day gift.

The charge stems from a weapons conviction of Carter in New York more than a decade ago, for which he was sentenced to eight months in prison. Convicted felons are barred under federal law from possessing firearms.

Man lets special anniversary pass without any celebration

DEAR ABBY: I have been married to my husband 25 years as of today. (We've been a couple for 32 years.) He has done absolutely nothing to commemorate this. I reminded him months ago to save for something because it was very important to me. My friends would have happily helped him do something.

Every year it's the same old nothing. He asked me to remind him and I did, but it made no difference. Same with my birthday. Yes, we have been in better positions financially than now. But if something was important to him, he always saved for it. I have money put away we could have used, and he knew this. Yet nothing.

The only time he shows me any kind of emotion or love/sex is when he's drunk. But he swears he loves me. I don't suspect cheating. He doesn't care what he looks like when we go places. I always try to look my best.

I'm at the end of my rope. This 25th anniversary really hurt me. He said we'll do something when he can. I can't take it anymore. I feel worthy of nothing, like I don't matter. What do I do?

ANNIVERSARY SADNESS

DEAR ANNIVERSARY SADNESS: If the only time your husband shows you any kind of affectionate attention is when he is drunk, you have bigger problems than the fact that he "forgets" special occasions. Is this the way you want to spend the next 25 years of your life?

Receiving gifts does not make a person "worthy." You need to work on your level of self-esteem. As expensive as a celebration might have been, a gift you could both benefit from would be couples counseling.

DEAR ABBY: I have a wonderful mother-in-law who recently turned 92. For the past five or so years, she has struggled with urinary incontinence and uses adult diapers. However, her urine really stinks. I don't think she changes her diaper often enough, and the smell is really strong throughout the day. I'm also afraid that by not changing often enough, she may get an infection.

Her children refuse to discuss the issue with her, so nothing is being done to change the situation. I find myself distancing from her since I can't stand the smell. I have researched the topic, and I don't think there's anything that can be done to address the incontinence issue due to her age and other medical issues. However, I think if she drank more fluids so her urine wouldn't be so concentrated, the smell wouldn't be so bad. I have talked to her about drinking more water for other reasons, but she doesn't want to because then she would need to urinate more.

I really love my MIL, but I can't stand to be near her. I feel like I'm only the daughter-in-law and that any discussions should come from her children, but they don't want to bring it up with her. What can be done?

KEEPING MY DISTANCE

DEAR KEEPING: Has your mother-in-law seen a urologist and been told nothing can be done about her incontinence problem, or is she so embarrassed she hasn't seen one? Because her children refuse to discuss this with their mother, the ball is in your court. Please talk to her and urge her to see a doctor. Because when people age their sense of smell can diminish, she may not be aware that she has the problem you're describing.

She does need to drink more water and change her diaper more often than she's doing. Her mental and physical health could depend upon it. But she also needs to see a urologist.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

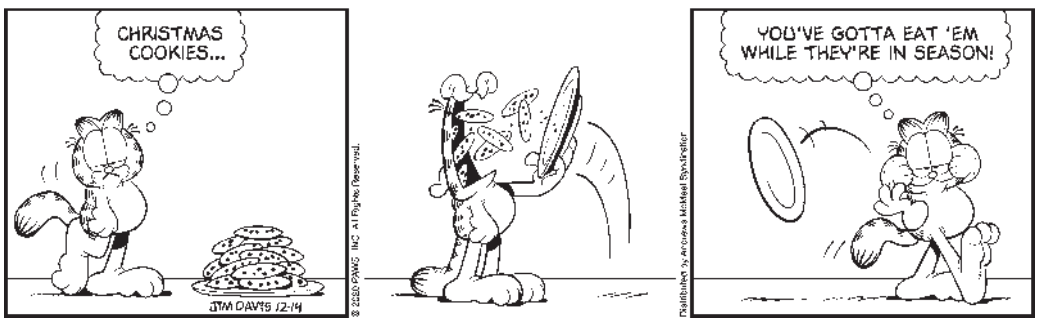
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

SO LONG, MOM! HOBBES AND I ARE OFF TO THE NORTH POLE!
THE NORTH POLE?
YEP! WE'RE GOING TO SEE SANTA.
HOW COME? YOU ALREADY SENT HIM YOUR CHRISTMAS LIST.
YEAH, BUT I'M AFRAID SANTA MIGHT NOT HAVE CONSIDERED MY VERSION OF CERTAIN RECENT EVENTS. HOBBES IS GOING TO BE MY LAWYER AND PRESENT MY CASE.
JUST HOW RECENT ARE THESE RECENT EVENTS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?
GOTTA GO, MOM. IT'S A LONG WALK.

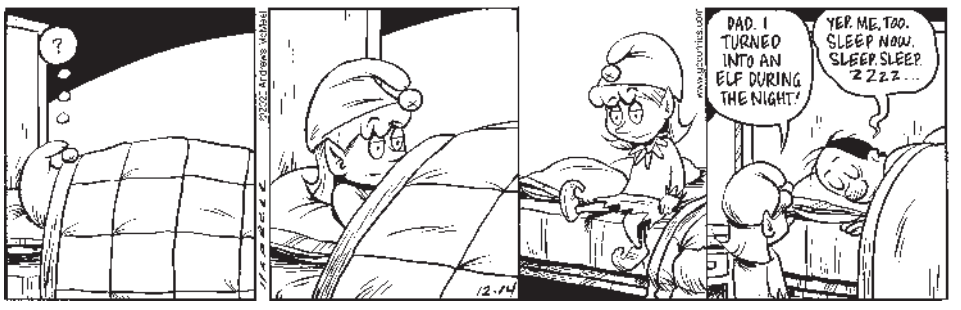
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



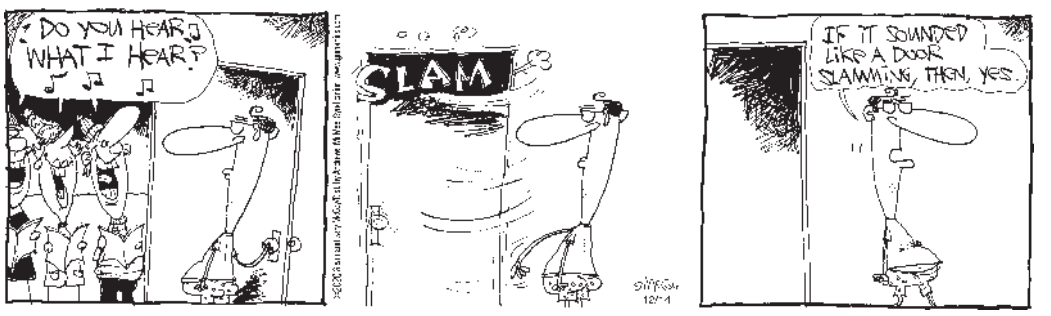
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Napkin's place
4 Orange variety
9 Kilmer of "Top Gun"
12 — tizzy
13 Mixed metal
14 Green prefix
15 Genuine
17 Snitch
18 Lair
19 Excuses
21 Frolic
24 Pinta's companion
25 Mined-over matter
26 "Game, —, match!"
28 Hands (out)
31 Region (Abbr.)
33 Badly lit
35 At hand
36 Aegean island
38 Lincoln or Ford
40 Menagerie
41 Madonna's "La — Bonita"
43 Most pleasant
45 Ritzy part of L.A.
47 Nabokov novel
48 Foreman foe
49 Back bones
54 Carnival city
55 Perfume compound
56 Hostel
57 Quarterback Marino
58 Kentucky Derby prize
59 Physique

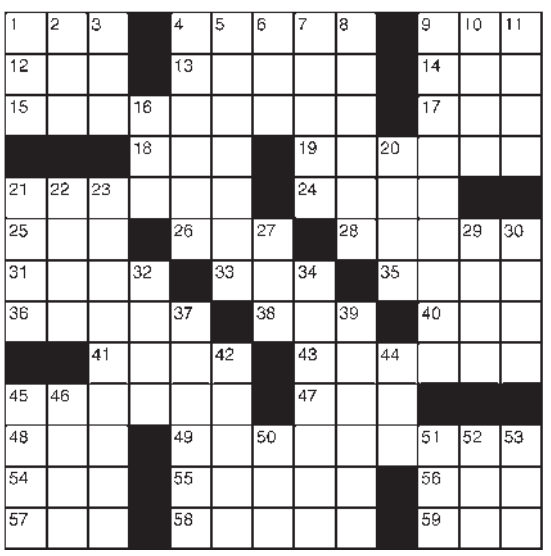
DOWN

1 Tyler of "Jersey Girl"
2 Chemical suffix
3 Standard
4 Westerns
5 On an angle
6 Priestly garment
7 — Heights (Mideast region)
8 Pupil's cover
9 Put into words
10 Anti-oxidant berry
11 Oodles
16 Altar vow
20 Privy to
21 Barracks beds
22 Geometric calculation
23 Bright red-orange
27 Spasm
29 Swelled heads
30 Attempt
32 Artist Bonheur
34 Sea cow
37 Thin slice
39 Passengers
42 "You — Beautiful"
44 Taxi
45 Poet of yore
46 Lamb alias
50 ACLU concerns
51 Tease
52 Year in Spain
53 Conclude

Solution time: 26 mins.

F	I	B	■	P	E	A	■	P	I	N	E	S
A	R	I	■	A	L	T	■	E	D	I	T	S
R	I	N	■	N	E	W	S	P	A	P	E	R
M	S	G	■	S	C	A	P	E	■	■	■	■
S	H	O	O	■	I	H	U	■	E	D	A	M
■	■	■	H	E	S	■	D	E	N	N	I	S
C	R	E	A	M	■	■	■	Y	E	A	R	N
C	H	E	R	U	B	■	P	E	R	■	■	■
C	O	K	E	■	Q	U	R	■	Q	B	I	T
■	■	■	B	O	R	I	S	■	O	N	E	■
P	A	P	E	R	B	A	C	K	■	S	E	N
O	L	I	V	A	■	L	E	I	■	S	R	A
P	A	G	E	D	■	S	Y	D	■	A	T	M

Last Friday's Answer 12/14



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Vanessa Hudgens, 32; Sophie Monk, 41; Beth Orton, 50; Dee Wallace, 72.

Happy Birthday: Pay attention to detail, and choose your words wisely this year. You will be misled by someone who isn't trustworthy if you are gullible. Getting facts straight and being honest and articulate will help you end pending problems and replace them with the success you desire. Evaluate relationships, consider who brings out the best in you and make adjustments. Your numbers are 2, 10, 18, 23, 33, 38, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Put an emphasis on learning and implementing what you discover into your daily routine. A lifestyle change looks promising as long as you verify the information and leave nothing to chance. Dealing with institutions will lead to confusion and uncertainty. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Dare to be different. An innovative approach to how you do your job and handle others will boost your reputation and encourage others to support your efforts. Address matters that have been left unresolved, and you'll get your way. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Be careful who you trust. Someone will give you the wrong impression or lead you on a wild goose chase if you aren't careful. Ask questions, do your research and take nothing for granted. Make personal changes that will ease stress. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Dig in, and don't stop until you finish what you start. Channel your energy into work and getting ahead, not into negativity or arguing with someone. Avoid joint ventures, and be careful when divvying up shared expenses. Focus on fair play. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Hone your skills, and improve the way you live. Don't let the changes others make influence you to follow suit. Do what's best for you, and speak up about how you feel and what you plan to do. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Domestic issues will turn into an emotional tug-of-war if you disagree with someone close to you. Pause and consider every angle of a situation before you take action. Don't limit what you can do by acting in haste. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Busy yourself with something that excites you. Pick up a new hobby, reconnect with an old friend through social media or sign up for an online course that can lead to additional income. Resolve a matter concerning a friend or relative. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Refuse to let anyone put limitations on you or what you can do. A personal change to the way you look or take care of yourself will give you the wherewithal to make an overdue change that will improve your life. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't play games or participate in activities that might affect your reputation, position or status. Truth matters, and verifying facts will be what saves you from a bad situation. Focus on fitness, health and doing your very best. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Gather information before you make a move. Look over contracts, negotiate your position and get what you want in writing to ensure no one takes advantage of you. A mistake will lead to uncertainty and domestic problems. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Check in with people you have successfully collaborated with in the past, and an exciting point of view that helps you overcome a setback or uncertainty you've been facing will come your way. Speak from the heart, and take action. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Stick to what and who you know you can trust. Someone will mislead you to get a competitive edge. Don't share your plans prematurely, or someone will take over. Concentrate on perfection, discipline and creating opportunities. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, resourceful and determined. You are smart and persuasive.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

6		7		8		2		3
	2	4			1	9	5	
				6				
	9		8		6			
3		1				5		9
			3		9		7	
				7				
	1	8	5			6	2	
9		5		4		3		1

Difficulty Level ★ 12/14

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

4	1	6	5	7	3	9	8	2
9	2	3	8	4	1	5	7	6
8	5	7	6	2	9	4	1	3
7	6	8	2	1	4	3	9	5
1	9	5	3	6	7	2	4	8
2	3	4	9	5	8	7	6	1
5	8	2	4	9	6	1	3	7
6	7	9	1	3	2	8	5	4
3	4	1	7	8	5	6	2	9

Difficulty level ★★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

STUDYING AT MIT **Solution: 7 letters**

F	C	L	A	R	E	N	E	G	Ⓒ	A	N	C	E	R
D	E	O	S	P	A	C	E	Ⓛ	R	A	T	E	Y	M
C	A	Y	N	N	S	M	Ⓤ	E	S	U	M	G	E	A
H	N	O	N	C	Q	Ⓑ	S	B	U	R	O	D	W	T
E	A	A	R	M	O	E	E	O	R	L	I	A	A	H
M	M	O	C	L	A	U	Q	N	O	A	T	V	C	S
I	G	S	S	R	I	N	R	I	I	S	I	E	E	N
S	U	R	C	H	S	A	B	S	O	R	T	N	T	R
T	R	H	K	I	O	O	R	N	E	G	A	M	E	D
R	K	O	W	S	S	C	I	E	N	C	E	M	R	E
Y	C	D	S	E	N	Y	K	P	O	R	U	A	B	T
H	L	E	T	N	I	A	H	L	U	E	V	M	O	R
R	I	S	K	Y	E	S	S	P	E	R	D	O	O	A
R	N	A	M	T	L	A	S	A	A	Y	M	I	K	D
D	R	A	O	B	K	L	A	H	C	S	F	I	V	E

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Altman, Annan, Biology, Book, Bose, Brain, Cancer, Chalkboard, Chemistry, Club, Concourse, E-Trade, Feynman, Five, Game, General, Harvard, Intel, Klein, Koch, Krugman, Marine, Maths, Media, Museums, NASA, Nobel, Physics, Qualcomm, Railroad, Rate, Research, Rhodes, Riess, Risky, River, Rosbash, Science, Shockley, Smoot, Space, Tech, UROP, Video, Watson, Weiss

Last Friday's Answer: Briefings

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Heat open to trading Herro for Harden

FLORIDA—The Heat would pursue a trade for Houston Rockets superstar James Harden if he's made available, according to Barry Jackson of the Miami Herald.

Harden reportedly asked for a trade to Brooklyn in November, but he's believed to have expanded his list of desired destinations to include Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and Miami in recent days. With Harden under contract for at least two more years, the Rockets don't feel pressured to move him in the near future, and they're resisting for the time being unless the offer includes a young star and significant draft assets.

Could Miami fit the bill? It's possible, with Jackson noting that second-year guard Tyler Herro "would be in play" in a potential Harden proposal. The No. 13 overall pick in the NBA's 2019 draft, Herro improved throughout his rookie campaign and averaged 16.0 points (37.5% on 3-pointers), 5.1 rebounds, and 3.7 assists per game in the playofffs for a Miami squad that made the NBA Finals. Just 20 years old, the 6-foot-5 Herro is seen as a promising prospect with room for more development.

Miami's best possible hypothetical trade offer would be Herro; two among Precious Achiuwa, Kendrick Nunn and Duncan Robinson; the Heat's 2025 and 2027 first-round picks (which would require Miami and Oklahoma City agreeing to unlock protection on the Heat's 2023 first-rounder owed the Thunder) and Kelly Olynyk and Andre Iguodala as cap facilitators.

Because Herro is on his initial NBA contract, the Heat would need to send out large salary fillers such as Olynyk and Iguodala in order to make any trade for Harden's $41.3-million contract permissible.

From Harden's perspective, the intrigue of Miami is clear. He's long had a close relationship with Heat star Jimmy Butler, and the team played in the NBA Finals just two months ago. With the 31-year-old Harden seeking his first championship, the Heat could give him an opportunity.

The bigger question is whether Miami is the most ideal partner for Rockets GM Rafael Stone. While Herro is an intriguing prospect, he hasn't been an All-Star or All-NBA player, in contrast to Philadelphia's Ben Simmons. (Then again, Herro is four years younger than Simmons, and it's also possible that perhaps the 76ers don't make Simmons available.)

Herro would seem to present greater upside than most of the rumored names available from Brooklyn or Milwaukee. It's possible, of course, that Houston could trade Harden to other teams beyond his preferred list—but it remains to be seen whether a team would offer significant value for Harden in a trade, if they aren't convinced that he wants to be there.

At a bare minimum, the presence of Herro in the bidding could be useful leverage for the Rockets, in that it presents evidence of a highly valued asset that other suitors would need to offer aggressively to beat out. Depending on what Stone and his staff think of Herro's potential, perhaps the Miami deal could eventually be the one to reach the finish line.

For now, the Rockets appear focused primarily on getting Harden back with the team and perhaps re-convincing him, with a strong start to the 2020-21 season, that he could contend for a title in Houston.

AP

In this Oct. 18, 2019 file photo, Houston Rockets guard James Harden (13) drives against Miami Heat's Goran Dragic (7) and Tyler Herro (14) during the first quarter of an NBA preseason game in Miami.

According to new head coach Stephen Silas, Harden could begin practicing with the Rockets as soon as Monday, once he clears COVID-19 testing protocols after his delayed arrival to training camp.

Roster expanded to 15

The NBA coach's challenge will become a permanent part of the game—and with zero changes this year.

Plus, in a time when players will be missing games due to COVID-19, the active rosters on game day will expand to 15 for this season.

The NBA's Competition Committee—a mix of coaches, GMs, and league officials—voted on both of those rules for the upcoming season, reports Shams Charania of The Athletic. Both also need to be approved by a vote of the owners (the Board of Governors), but that will be a formality.

It's a little surprising the committee didn't tweak the coach's challenge rule—if a coach challenges and wins it, he should not forfiet the right to challenge anything for the rest of the game. That has never been fair, but it will be the challenge system for another season.

The expanded rosters was expected, with the league providing coaches options to help get through a season with a condensed schedule and where teams will inevitably have players out due to COVID-19. No surprise that the vote was unanimous.

Mixed preaseason debut for LaMelo

It didn't take long for LaMelo Ball to establish a couple of facts in his preseason debut on Saturday.

He has a lot to work on before becoming a reliable threat on offense. He is already one of the most entertaining facilitators in the NBA.

In his preseason debut, the Charlotte Hornets rookie finished with zero points on 0-of-5 shooting, 4 assists, 10 rebounds and 4 turnovers in 16 minutes. It was an uneven night for one of the most divisive prospects of the 2020 NBA draft, but it was also hard not to get excited by some of the passes he was making.

Like this no-look, behind-the-back assist in transition that can only really be appreciated after seeing the replay. ***(AP/NBC)***

Tokyo Games sponsors pay $3.3B, but more still needed

TOKYO (AP)—Domestic sponsors already have contributed a record $3.3 billion to help pay for the Tokyo Olympics. That's at least twice as much as any previous games.

But it's still not enough.

Now they're being asked to pay millions more to cover some of the soaring costs of the one-year postponement.

This comes as Japanese businesses are battered by the COVID-19 pandemic, raising doubts about re-investing in an Olympics that may be short on fans but long on pandemic-related rules to discourage tourists, sightseeing and spending.

"We are in the process of asking for additional sponsorship (payments) from our partners," organizing committee CEO Toshiro Muto said last week as he detailed why the postponement will cost organizers and Japanese taxpayers an extra $2.8 billion. "The sponsors have expressed the willingness to contribute to the games next year. But they have not specified an amount."

None of the nearly 70 domestic sponsors is saying "no—at least publicly—to an Olympics backed by Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and driven by Japan's powerful advertising conglomerate Dentsu Inc., the official marketing agency for the Tokyo Olympics.

Dentsu helped land the Olympics, lined up the sponsors and stands to profit with the Olympics opening on July 23, 2021.

Little arm-twisting may be needed to keep sponsors on board. Harmony and consensus are valued in Japan, and this stretches to the corporate world. It's best illustrated by this Japanese saying: The nail that sticks up gets hammered down (Deru kugi wa utareru).

Pulling off the Olympics is viewed as a national project, a matter of honor and saving face. Doubts expressed behind the scenes are unlikely to trickle to the surface. Some sponsors might offer additional "in-kind" payments—contributions not made in cash—but there has been little open dissent and few contract details made public. In the end, any shortfall is likely to be made up by taxpayers.

Among the domestic sponsors is Japanese airline ANA, which posted losses of $1.8 billion through the first half of the fiscal year, and travel agency JTB, with losses of $750 million in the same period.

Also on board is the financial services company Nomura, both Narita and Haneda airports, food makers such as Kikkoman and Ajinomoto, and the SkyTree tower. The Japanese media, charged with covering the Olympics, also are on in droves including top newspapers Mainichi, Nikkei, Yomiuri and Asahi.

The Associated Press contacted a dozen sponsors and almost all refused to comment. A Tokyo Gas spokesperson said organizers had advised against speaking to the media.

One of few on-the-record comments came from instant noodle maker Nissin, which has registered 63% profit growth recently as people stuck at home turn to quick meals.

"We will continue with our preparation toward a safe and secure Olympics while paying heed to further developments," spokesman Tomonao Matsuo said. He said no decision had been made on the renewal.

The Tokyo Olympics have become very expensive. A University of Oxford study says they are the most costly Summer Games on record.

The official cost of putting on the Tokyo Olympics is $12.6 billion in the latest budget. But a government audit last year said it was probably twice that much, and this was before the added cost of the delay. This is all public money except for $5.6 billion from the privately funded organizing committee budget. Domestic sponsors make up about 60% of this income.

Polls in Japan show wavering support for holding the Olympics in the midst of a pandemic, which IOC President Thomas Bach tried to counter last month in Tokyo in meetings with organizers, politicians and sponsors.

McCann, Mets near $40M, 4-year deal

NEW YORK (AP) — Free agent catcher James McCann and the New York Mets were close to completing a $40 million, four-year contract Saturday as the team continues to upgrade its roster under new owner Steve Cohen.

A person close to the deal confirmed the details to The Associated Press under condition of anonymity because there was no official announcement. Other news outlets reported the terms earlier in the day.

McCann was an All-Star with the White Sox in 2019 when he hit .273 with 18 home runs and 60 RBIs. He batted .289 with seven homers and 15 RBIs for Chicago this year in 31 games while splitting time with Yasmani Grandal during the pandemic-shortened season.

Last week, the Mets signed free agent reliever Trevor May to a $15.5 million, two-year deal. That was the first major move by the team since Cohen bought the club for $2.42 billion last month.

The Mets haven't reached the playoffs since losing the 2016 NL wild-card game. New York went 26-34 this season with Wilson Ramos and Robinson Chirinos as its catchers.

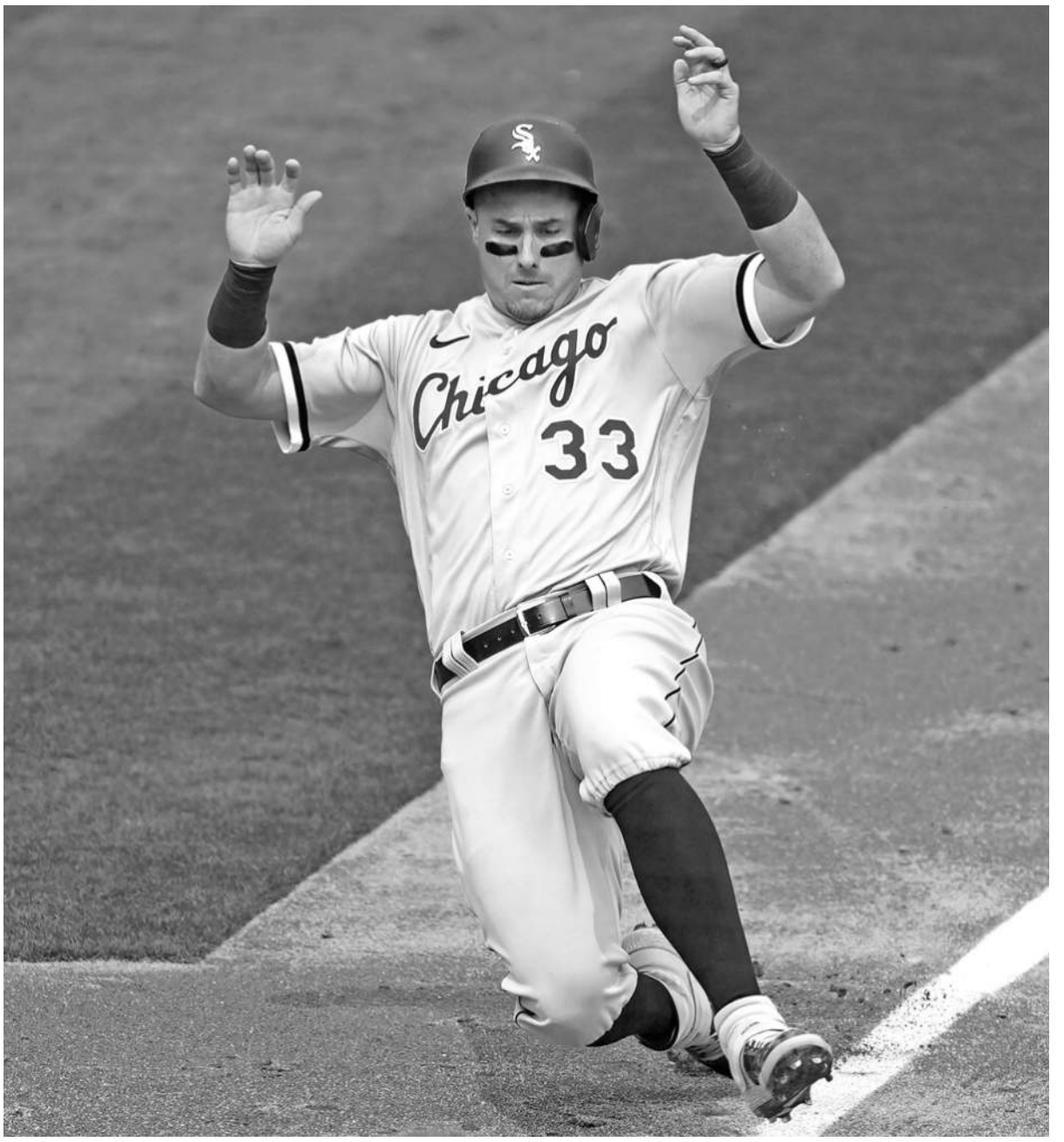
The 30-year-old McCann has improved behind the plate, as measured by defensive metrics, and is a steady presence with the bat. He played a key role in the development of White Sox ace Lucas Giolito.

McCann began his seven-year career in 2014 with Detroit and 118 games are the most he's played in any season. He was regarded as the second-best catcher on the free agent market behind J.T. Realmuto.

Cohen hired Sandy Alderson as team president in his first move after buying the team, and the Mets have been interviewing for a new general manger.

The Mets and their fans are eager to see a roster remake, especially after the infusion of Cohen's cash.

NL Cy Young Award winner Trevor Bauer and center fielder George Springer, the 2017 World Series MVP, are two prime free agents said to be attracting the Mets' interest.



AP

Chicago White Sox's James McCann slides into home to score against the Oakland Athletics during the third inning in Game 3 of an American League wild-card series, Oct. 1, 2020, in Oakland, Calif.

Meanwhile, after weeks spent negotiating a potential deal to bring aboard a veteran backstop, the Angels on Saturday narrowly missed an opportunity to add McCann to their roster.

That the Angels came close to signing McCann, who grew up in Santa Barbara County, hints at a potential change in philosophy under new general manager Perry Minasian. The Angels tended not to invest in offense-first catchers during former general manager Billy Eppler's tenure, choosing instead to rely on players with strong defensive acumens. They also divvied responsibilities between two catchers each of the last two seasons.

If the Angels still want to add a catcher who provides offensive upside, they could go after two-time All-Star J.T. Realmuto. However, Realmuto is the top position player available in free agency and is believed to be targeting a nine-figure contract. He is likely out of the price range of the Angels, who are committed to retooling a pitching staff that posted a ghastly 5.09 earned-run average in 2020.

New GM

The New York Mets are also finalizing a deal to hire Arizona Diamondbacks assistant general manager Jared Porter as their general manager, according to a person familiar with the talks.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on Saturday night on condition of anonymity because the agreement hadn't been announced. Other outlets also reported the hiring.

Porter won three World Series in the front office for the Boston Red Sox and another with the Chicago Cubs before joining Arizona as a senior vice president and assistant GM in 2017. He's worked various roles in baseball operations, but his primary focus has been scouting. He was a director of pro scouting for Boston and Chicago.

The 41-year-old Porter will work under team president Sandy Alderson, who has taken charge of baseball operations under new owner Steve Cohen.

The Mets have already been aggressive following a 26-34 disappointment during the pandemic-shortened regular season. The club is closing in on a deal with free agent catcher James McCann for $40 million over four years, another person told the AP on Saturday, speaking on condition of anonymity because there was no official announcement.

New York also signed free agent reliever Trevor May last week to a $15.5 million, two-year deal —the first major transaction for the club since Cohen bought the team for $2.42 billion last month.

Porter inherits a team featuring a number of star players, including two-time Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom, and All-Star hitters Pete Alonso, Jeff McNeil and Michael Conforto. Hard-throwing righty Noah Syndergaard had Tommy John surgery in March and is expected to return sometime during the 2021 season.

Columbus beats Seattle, takes 2nd MLS title

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)— Lucas Zelarayan scored midway through the first half and added the clincher in the 82nd minute and the Columbus Crew won their second MLS Cup title, beating the defending champion Seattle Sounders 3-0 on Saturday night.

Derrick Etienne Jr. also scored in the first 45 minutes for Columbus. The Crew withstood Seattle's second-half pressure and finally celebrated after Zelarayan's goal.

Zelarayan, the MLS newcomer of the year and largest signing in franchise history, was the best player on the field on a night the Crew were playing short-handed. Columbus was without midfielders Darlington Nagbe and Pedro Santos after both tested positive for COVID-19 this week.

Despite the absences, the Crew were the decidedly better side and Zelarayan was the instigator. Columbus claimed its first title since 2008 and denied Seattle a chance at being just the fourth back-to-back champions in league history. The Sounders, playing in their fourth final in five years, were trying to be the first repeat champions since the LA Galaxy in 2011-12.

This year's champions have ties to Toronto FC and Canadian soccer.

The Crew are led by president and general manager Tim Bezbatchenko, who previously won an MLS Cup title with Toronto FC in 2017 as their GM and vice-president of soccer operations. Assistant GM Corey Wray and Jaime McMillan, vice-president of soccer administration and operations, are also former members of TFC's front office staff.

Pat Onstad, the Crew's technical director and vice-president of soccer operations, has 60 caps to his name as a goalkeeper for the Canadian national team.

Crew defender Josh Williams also spent two seasons, 2015 and 2016, with Toronto.

It was the first appearance in the final for Columbus since 2015 when the Crew were denied a title by the Portland Timbers and current Columbus coach Caleb Porter. The franchise was nearly relocated just a few years ago, but efforts to keep the team in Columbus proved successful and now there is a championship to celebrate.

The loss of Nagbe and Santos seemed to be the biggest story entering the final. It was the first time this season Columbus played without either player in its lineup.

But their teammates—namely Zelarayan—made their absences moot.

Zelarayan scored in the 25th minute off a perfect feed from Harrison Afful, getting behind Seattle fullback Alex Roldan and snaking his left-footed volley past goalkeeper Stefan Frei. Six minutes later, Zelarayan made the smart play finding Etienne and his curling shot gave Columbus a 2-0 lead. Etienne started in place of Santos.

"Obviously, you go one goal down, that's OK. But going two down certainly was a dagger," Seattle coach Brian Schmetzer said. "That was something that you have to give credit to Columbus."

And Zelarayan showed patience before rocketing a left-footed shot past Frei for the final goal. Zelarayan was the third player in an MLS Cup final with two goals and the first since Alecko Eskandarian in 2004.

Seattle needed a frantic comeback in the final 15 minutes of its Western Conference final against Minnesota United just to reach MLS Cup. Down 2-0 to Minnesota, the Sounders scored three times, including Gustav Svensson's winner in stoppage time off a corner kick.

The deficit was the same for most of the second half against Columbus, but the magic of Seattle's comeback just five days earlier was absent. The Sounders had numerous chances in the second half, but attempts failed to find the net. Nicolas Lodeiro's shot through traffic in the 71st minute trickled wide. Three minutes later, Svensson's header off a corner kick failed to find the target.

Jordan Morris had the final good look for Seattle in the 80th minute, but his header was saved by Eloy Room.

Schmetzer said afterward that Lodeiro was dealing with a calf strain that limited his effectiveness.

"It's certainly not a good way to end your season," Schmetzer said. "But I would circle back and say that the club, the team, did come back through some adversity, and made it to another final, back to back, which is very hard to do in a league like MLS with parity."

With playoffs unlikely, fading Pats have questions at QB

NEW ENGLAND (AP)— For the first time in more than a decade, the New England Patriots will head into their final three games of the season with an unsettled playoff fate.

The Patriots entered the week in 10th place in the AFC and trudging through one of their worst years of Bill Belichick's tenure. Now 6-7 following a 24-3 loss to the Los Angeles Rams on Thursday night, New England's long-shot hopes of extending an NFL-record run of 11 consecutive playoff appearances have faded even more.

And the questions about New England's future at quarterback that surrounded the team this offseason following Tom Brady's departure have returned, with perhaps even greater urgency.

The Patriots' loss to the Rams was marked by the same problems that have plagued New England for most of 2020.

Cam Newton's struggles in the passing game reemerged, leaving the offense one-dimensional and predictable opposite a dogged Los Angeles defense that disrupted the Patriots' run game and plowed through an offensive line that surrendered a season-high six sacks.

AP
New England Patriots quarterback Cam Newton (1) is sacked by Los Angeles Rams defensive end Michael Brockers during the second half of an NFL football game Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020, in Inglewood, Calif.

It led to Newton being benched in the fourth quarter in favor of backup Jarrett Stidham, raising the question of whether a more permanent change could be on the horizon. But when asked postgame whether he plans to continue with Newton as the starter, Belichick was unequivocal.

"Cam's our quarterback," he said.

Belichick was queried again on Friday and again dismissed the idea of starting Stidham.

"I've answered that question for the last time," Belichick said.

As for where the Patriots go from here, safety and team captain Devin McCourty said their approach will remain unchanged until they're eliminated from playoff contention.

"Just keep playing. It is what it is right now. We'll keep fighting. We'll see how it works out," he said. "But there's no easy answer other than we have three games left. The goal is still the same. Try to win the remaining three games."

It was a sentiment that was repeated by his teammates.

"We ain't a bunch of quitters," defensive tackle Lawrence Guy said. "It doesn't matter what the record is. It doesn't matter what the outcome is. ... We're going to go out there and play some football."

Players fined in Dolphins-Bengals brawl

Bengals safety Shawn Williams was suspended for one game without pay for stomping on the leg of Dolphins offensive lineman Solomon Kindley during Sunday's game. The NFL did not give him additional punishment for being ejected from the game.

The NFL did hand down seven fines to six other players involved in the brawl that marred the game between the teams last week, Tom Pelissero of NFL Media reports. Three players were ejected in that fracas, following Xavien Howard and Tyler Boyd's disagreement earlier in the game that led to their disqualifications.

Bengals special teams player Mike Thomas, who started the fourth quarter melee with back-to-back hits on punt returner Jakeem Grant that drew penalties, was fined $4,853.

Dolphins receiver Mack Hollins, who was ejected, was fined for both unsportsmanlike conduct and unnecessary roughness. The fines were $4,412 each.

BASA

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first basket in overtime takes the game. A match can also be won under the 10-minute mark by the first player to score 12 points. A point is awarded to a 2-point field goal and 2 markers for a shot beyond the arc.

The tournament, which was the first basketball competition held in the CNMI since tournaments were either suspended or canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, had a double-elimination format.

Besides the Mintac-Duenas duel, the other first round pairings were Basa vs Jose Sablan; Santos vs De Guzman; Schmidt vs Andrew; Arellano vs McWilliams; Fitial vs Erdene; Blake vs Barbo; and Pelisamen vs Castro.

While the first match was decided in extension, the next three finished early with the eventual winners banking on their steady performances from downtown to gain the outright victory.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Jaymark De Guzman, right, takes a shot against Coby Santos during their match in the Marianas International Basketball League's Kings of The Game last Saturday at the Agape Gymnasium.

Meanwhile, MIBL would like to thank the following for supporting the Kings of The Game: The Game Athletics, Sunny Side Cafe, Latte Built Gym, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Eats Easy, Poki Yaki, Aqua Resort Club, and Agape Christian School.

NMIVA

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that the CNMI will be hosting. Beach volleyball is one of the six sports initially approved for inclusion in the program for the quadrennial competition. NMIVA will be working with the Northern Marianas Sports Association, the 2022 Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee, and the Oceania Zonal Volleyball Association to facilitate the beach volleyball competition in the Mini Games.

Meanwhile, NMIVA secretary Shawn Davis said that the association is looking at working with Oceania Zonal Volleyball Association to increase their referee capacity in preparation for the Mini Games.

Davis said that because of the travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be challenging to bring in qualified and certified officials from Oceania, so the zone is hoping NMIVA will train officials to create a pool that will be utilized for the 2022 competition.

STUCK

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club without a mask prior to the start of training camp. Of course, that nocturnal pursuit raised a red flag and Houston subsequently held him off from joining training camp as he had to go through mandated COVID-19 quarantine.

It's not exactly Butler going 5-on-5 against T'Wolves cornerstones Karl Anthony-Towns and Andrew Wiggins with a bunch of scrubs and thoroughly dominating them, but Harden seems hell-bent in humiliating Houston owner Tilman Fertitta with his recent antics.

Houston then played its first preseason game against the woeful Chicago Bulls last Saturday with Harden absent. But the Rockets hardly missed him as reclamation projects and former Kentucky Wildcats teammates Wall and Demarcus Cousins showed the way in a 21-point victory.

Harden has since rejoined the team and I wouldn't be surprised if The Beard tried to out-Jimmy Jimmy Butler by teaming up with Houston's ball boys and challenge coach Stephen Silas' first five in a scrimmage.

As it stands, the former Arizona State star, who was picked third overall in the 2009 NBA Draft by the OKC Thunder, has added two more teams he would like to suit up for as aside from the Philadelphia 76ers and Brooklyn Nets, Harden also wants to continue his career with the Miami Heat and Milwaukee Bucks.

Harden can end up with the 76ers and Nets, but I bet that Philadelphia and Brooklyn would have to pay through the nose before landing the eight-time NBA All-Star, as there's no love lost between Fertitta and D'Antoni and more so with Morey.

A trade for Harden would have to start with either Nets superstars Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, while talks with the 76ers won't go nowhere without putting Ben Simmons on the trading blocks.

For the Heat, the Rockets would demand no other than last season's NBA Playoff wunderkind Tyler Herro as the centerpiece of a trade that would most certainly include 3-point marksman Duncan Robinson, veterans Andre Iguodala and Kelly Olynyk, and at least a couple of future first round draft picks.

If I were Pat Riley, I'd nix the proposed trade right from the get-go, as none of Harden's previous actuations scream of Heat Culture and the fit would be wobbly at best. Plus, Herro has the potential of becoming the second coming of Devin Booker or even Klay Thompson and no way I'm trading that for a soon-to-be 32-year-old ball-dominant player who's perfected the art of matador defense.

Harden picking Milwaukee as a desired destination is more for leverage than anything else. Aside from the fact that the Bucks already unloaded a million draft picks in trading for Jrue Holiday in the offseason, Harden doesn't particularly like Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Flashback to last year's NBA All-Star Game when East All-Stars captain Antetokounmpo said "I want someone that's going to pass the ball" after he was asked why he didn't pick The Beard as a teammate.

Harden was also a bit snappy with his retort when he said "I wish I could be 7 feet and run and just dunk" in an obvious jab on Antetokounmpo's limited offensive game.

Whatever happens to Harden in the next couple of weeks—or even months—always makes great NBA theater and I'm glad I'm here for the ride! Hang tight folks, the NBA's about to start in a couple of weeks on Dec. 22.

AP
In this Nov. 30, 2019 file photo, Houston Rockets' Russell Westbrook (0) talks to James Harden during a break in their game against the Atlanta Hawks in Houston.

Heat open to trading Herro for Harden

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Basa and company are back

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Basketball in the CNMI is back with the Marianas International Basketball League holding the Kings of The Game—the first-ever 1-on-1 tournament on the islands featuring former national team players against the regulars in the hard court.

Preston Basa, Coby Santos, Dean Blake, Douglas Schmidt, and Freddie Pelisamen, who have donned the CNMI colors in past regional tournaments, led the cast of the 16-player pool, showcasing their individual skills in last Saturday's competition at the Agape Gymnasium in Middle Road. Completing the field were Mak Mintac, Darwin Barbo, Joe Sablan, Matt Duenas, Jeff Castro, Jaymark De Guzman, Kelvin Fitial, Richard McWilliams, Arnold Arellano, Stephen Erdene, and Josh Andrew.

Mintac and Duenas kicked off the action in the Kings of The Game with the match going to overtime. Official results were withheld, as per requests by MIBL, as the group is featuring the event in the Youtube series about basketball.

"Marianas International Basketball league in partnership with IT&E launched the Kings of The Game as a platform to show the world our local basketball scene and also promote the Marianas at the same time," MIBL head Clint Albert said.

"The tournament was played last Dec. 12, but fans will have to watch the whole tournament broken down in five episodes with the first one to be launched on Dec. 18 at 5pm in the Marianas International Basketball League Youtube channel. Please subscribe to see all the action unfold and see the ultimate winner," Albert added.

Each game in last Saturday's tournament was played for 10 minutes with the player leading at the end of the regulation winning the match. In case of a tie, the player to score the

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Preston Basa, left, tries to dribble past Joe Sablan during their duel in the Marianas International Basketball League's Kings of The Game last Saturday at the Agape Gymnasium.

Nomination for NMIVA board now open

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association has opened the nomination period for its new board and is calling on the community to submit names of candidates no later than Jan. 10.

The association, during its virtual general assembly held last Thursday, said it will be filling up six of the seven NMIVA board slots. Nominees is open to anyone living in the CNMI for the 2020 election cycle and membership to NMIVA is not required. Anyone can nominate board members and nominations can be made online through https://forms.gle/VhHbXARJ1FSocrRC7. Election of the NMIVA board members will be held on Jan. 15 and those elected will serve a two-year term.

NMIVA's new set of officers will be facing a challenging task in the first year of their term, as the group will be preparing for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this 2018 file photo, MCS Knights' Richard Steele, left, and The Bump's Matthew Berline battle in the net during their title game in the co-ed U14 division of the Hope For Tomorrow Yutu Relief Fundraiser Beach Volleyball Tournament held at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan sand courts. Beach volleyball is included in the sports program for the 2022 Pacific Mini Games that the CNMI will be hosting.

Stuck in a rock and a Harden place

MARKSMAN
By MARK RABAGO
Associate Editor

Growing up Mark wanted to play pro basketball. When his talent and height didn't measure up, he opted for a career in journalism instead.

James Harden forcing a trade from Houston is like trying to get catsup out of a bottle—it'll come out just one way: Messy!

Harden is taking a page out of Jimmy Butler's playbook when the now Miami Heat star wanted out of the dysfunctional Minnesota Timberwolves. But don't hold your breath on the 2018 MVP leaving H-Town anytime soon.

You see, the Rockets already shipped out a former MVP and triple-double machine in Russell Westbrook and trading The Beard would just cement Houston's reputation as the biggest losers of the offseason.

Even before Brodie was traded to the Washington Wizards for John Wall, the Rockets were already smarting from the twin losses of coach Mike D'Antoni and general manager Daryl Morey.

D'Antoni is now an assistant coach to former ward, Steve Nash, in Brooklyn, while Morey is now the president of basketball operations for the Philadelphia 76ers.

And to put more salt on the wound, the three-time scoring champion has shortlisted those two exact teams as his destinations of choice if he ever is traded this offseason.

It really seems like Harden is trying to turn Houston fans against him in hopes that management will just give up and send him to any of his preferred teams ala-Jimmy Buckets. Case in point, is he reportedly partied in a strip

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